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JOHN RUSKIN'S SOCIAL THOUGHT: CONTEXT, ARGUMENT, AND INFLUENCE

by

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SANDRA ANN McCORMICK

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Date March 9, 1984

To my parents, Wilbert and Sophie McCormick,
who kindled my enthusiasm for life and learning.

ABSTRACT

JOHN RUSKIN'S SOCIAL THOUGHT:
CONTEXT, ARGUMENT, AND INFLUENCE

The dissertation argues that John Ruskin's social thought represents his most significant work as a nineteenth-century writer. Forming a major response to the philosophical debates and historical developments of the Victorian Period, his works demand that social, economic, and political policy be based on an attitude of responsibility for one's fellow men.

An analysis of his works indicates that the advice Ruskin offered, the warnings he articulated, and the hopes he expressed in the five major works--**A Joy For Ever**; **Unto This Last**; **Munera Pulveris**; **Time and Tide**; and **Fors Clavigera**-stress the protection of man's physical well-being and the development of his emotional and intellectual capacities. Furthermore, these humanistic concerns are consistent with his early social voice as expressed in **Modern Painters**, in the architectural studies--**The Seven Lamps of Architecture** and **The Stones of Venice**--and in the lectures of the fifties. The opening chapter, "Ruskin and His Critics," which provides an annotated survey of secondary criticism, explains the lack of critical attention given Ruskin's social thought and, in so doing, justifies this analysis.

Ruskin's works are examined in the context of nineteenth-century social and economic debates and the related philosophical tension between empiricism and transcendentalism. Chapter Two, "Ruskin's Social Thought: The Philosophical and Historical Context," examines the arguments which fluctuated between those supporting Individualism (a self-interested, non-interference philosophy of competition) and those supporting Socialism (a philosophy of co-operative distribution). The numerous areas of change advanced by Ruskin share a common economic premise based on the vision of a co-operative social system; and his ideas about "wealth" emphasize human rather than material goals. Ruskin's insistence that the study of economics not be separated from ethical and social repercussions reinforces his central theme that "There is no Wealth but Life."

The major social texts are analyzed chronologically to emphasize the continuity of Ruskin's vision. Chapter Three, "The Early Social Voice: The Art Trilogy and **A Joy For Ever**," surveys the beginnings of his social ideas and analyzes the early social thought epitomized in **A Joy For Ever**. Ruskin's major arguments against contemporary social policy and economic thought based on non-interference and self-interest are outlined in Chapter Four, "The Mature Voice: The Political Economics of **Unto This Last**, **Munera Pulveris**, and **Time and Tide**." Analysis of these writings on art and society indicates a progressive social statement logically linked by ideas. Further, this analysis shows that Ruskin's arguments and ideas, which support economic co-operation and social responsibility, are founded on the traditions of Christianity, transcendentalism, and humanism.

Contrary to Ruskin's own sense of failure (as evidenced in the letters of **Fors Clavigera**) and against critical opinion that his ideas are at best romantic and idealistic, this study concludes that Ruskin's social thought has directly and indirectly influenced social, economic, and political change in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Chapter Five, "The Influence of Ruskin's Social Thought," argues that, in particular, his works advanced nineteenth-century socialism and anticipated the directions of twentieth-century welfare economics.

Together, then, the five chapters of this dissertation underline the philosophical and historical context, the logic, and the coherence and continuity of Ruskin's writings, and indicate the influence of his ideas. Throughout this study is the contention that John Ruskin's social thought forms a consistent and influential schema aimed at social reform by way of government and individual responsibility.

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CHAPTER I

Ruskin and His Critics

> Large sections of the thinking world [believe] that, while Mr. Ruskin is a valuable art-critic and a brilliant litterateur, he has no claim to serious consideration as an economist and a thinker upon social reform . . . . This is the common price paid by literary genius to the dull-witted multitude, who have always been easily persuaded that a man who writes well cannot think clearly or deeply.
>
> (John A. Hobson, 1898){1}

John Ruskin (1819-1900) devoted the latter forty-five years of his life to an analysis and criticism of social, economic, and political developments in Great Britain. The years from 1857 to 1878 were his most productive: during them he wrote **The Political Economy of Art** (1857), later titled **A Joy For Ever**, his first advocacy of social justice through co-operation and responsible government; **Unto This Last** (1860), four essays outlining radical economic reform; **Munera Pulveris** (1862-63), a sequel of six papers; **Time and Tide by Weare and Tyne** (1867), twenty-five letters to the working men of England about their living and working conditions; and **Fors Clavigera** (1871-78; 1880-84), a fuller collection of letters to the working men in which he suggested that government take responsibility for educational, social, and economic improvements. In these works, as well as in numerous letters, pamphlets, and lectures, Ruskin pointed out the dangers and fallacies inherent in an economic and a political system built on the principles of classical economics: *laissez-faire*, competition, and capitalism.

Together the five works--**A Joy For Ever**; **Unto This Last**; **Munera Pulveris**; **Time and Tide**; **Fors Clavigera**--embody Ruskin's response to the emerging urban-industrial society. He described the changes taking place in society and recorded his feelings toward those changes. He discussed everything from science to religion, and from art to politics, but never incongruously. Rather, his advice, warnings, hopes, and interests were all motivated by his attempt to encourage social affection. Ruskin believed people naturally feel love, compassion, and responsibility for one another.{2} Central to his social writing is the belief that man can be motivated as much by interest in his fellow man, as by self-interest, the dogmatic belief of orthodox economists who, in the nineteenth century, were advocating an uncontrolled capitalist society.

Though in the forties and fifties Ruskin was known best as an art critic, his social criticism also appeared in works written during those years. In **The Seven Lamps of Architecture** (1848) he looked beyond the architecture itself to the life and feelings of the worker. In **The Stones of Venice** (1851-53) he proclaimed the rights of the worker and the responsibilities of industrialists and government alike to ensure those rights. In the last volume of **Modern Painters** (1860) Ruskin denounced economic systems in which profit is the primary concern. This work was preceded by his first major social text, **A Joy For Ever**, in which he made the two points which form the basis of much of his social policy: competition must be replaced by co-operation, and the prevalent doctrine of *laissez-faire* must be replaced by restraint, reponsibility, and, where necessary, regulation. By 1860, the year in which **Modern Painters** was completed, Ruskin had prepared the way for the remaining social texts. In that year four essays (published two years later as **Unto This Last**) appeared in the **Cornhill Magazine** and in **Harper's New Monthly Magazine.** These were by far the most influential of Ruskin's social and economic criticism. In his preface Ruskin announced a redefinition of wealth, and called for practical reforms which he enumerated. For ten years thereafter he expanded his notions of a just social system and continued to criticize everything he considered unjust. In **Munera Pulveris** he developed a theory of commerce and analyzed the evils of capitalism. In **Time and Tide**, published in 1867 the year of the second Reform Bill, he presented to the working men of England his conception of an ideal state. Ruskin expressed his feelings and gave advice in a number of other areas, in several major essays during the sixties. In "The Mystery of Life and Its Arts" (1868; included at the end of **Sesame and Lilies** in 1871) and his three lectures, "On Work," "On Traffic," and "On War" (published under the title, **The Crown of Wild Olive**, 1866) he applied his social theories to topics as diverse as library systems and national defence.

Paramount in all Ruskin's social writing is a strong sense of purpose: a sincere desire to improve living conditions for his fellow men; and a hope to effect beneficial social change. **Fors Clavigera**, the last major work on society, reflects the disappointment and depression of a man who, after devoting half his life to bringing about social change, recognized the lack of support for his ideas. In "The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century" (1884), a lecture he gave near the end of his career, Ruskin, in tragic tones of failure, foresaw that greed, materialism, and inhumanity would remain as stigmatic of the industrial world. Unfortunately, he was unable to see that from his disagreement with orthodox economic and political thinkers, and from his warnings and advice about the future, the social policies of our own century were to emerge--free education for all citizens, a just system of wages, legislated environmental control, and government responsibility for the old, the sick, the unemployed, and the poor.

Ruskin's reaction to the changes and developments in Victorian society was not atypical; fears and hopes like his were expressed by the best writers of the period. Charles Dickens, in novels such as **Bleak House** (1852) and **Hard Times** (1854) and Thomas Carlyle, in **Sartor Resartus** (1833) and **Past and Present** (1843), harshly criticized the utilitarian philosophy of the period and condemned the exploitive practices of their industrial society. William Morris and George Bernard Shaw, both of whom gave credit to Ruskin for many of their own beliefs, outlined political ideologies consistent with Ruskin's pleas for personal and political responsibility. And Morris, in **News From Nowhere** (1890), like T. H. Huxley, in "Evolution and Ethics" (1893), expressed hopes for an increased humanity within the social structure and a move away from the competitive tendencies of his society. Matthew Arnold in **Culture and Anarchy** (1869) insisted on the subordination of individual desires for the good of all mankind and of liberty for the restraints of a higher reason. In his poetry he articulated a longing for a lost world of natural and moral beauty.

Ruskin's insistence on a moral basis for art, literature, and social structures aligns his thought with the transcendental beliefs of Carlyle. His warnings against an unfeeling industrial world developed at the expense of man's associations with beauty, life, and the goodness of nature are indicative of the concern experienced by many nineteenth-century writers, a concern continued in the works of writers such as Richard

Jeffries, Thomas Hardy, W. B. Yeats, and D. H. Lawrence. In **The Last Romantics** (1949), Graham Hough traced the literary influence of Ruskin's social criticism:

> I became interested in the genesis of Yeats' ideas from those of the small poetic circle with whom he associated in the nineties. They in turn seemed to owe almost everything to Pater and the Pre-Raphaelites, and from them I was inevitably led back to Ruskin. At this point I came to a stop. The new ideas about the arts and their relations to religion and the social order all seemed to originate somewhere in the dense jungle of Ruskin's work.{3}

Ruskin's social theories and his exposition of them, then, are significant in the field of literary study; his ideas reinforce the central literary themes of the period, and provide a continuity between the romantic impulses of Coleridge and Carlyle, and the romantic hopes of Lawrence, and contribute to an understanding of the political and social milieu of Victorian England.

In spite of their significance in the study of Victorian literature, of their relevance to nineteenth-century social and economic debate, of their logic, and of the strength of their ideas, Ruskin's social writings have been largely neglected by critics. Though these works did gain recognition by the end of the nineteenth century, they were not appreciated in his own day and once again fell out of favour in the twentieth century. The unpopularity of Ruskin's social thought in his own day is easily understood because it ran counter to the accepted beliefs of the nineteenth-century middle class, which included the industrial and business leaders of England. In a 1938 study of Ruskin as a critic of nineteenth-century democracy, B. E. Lippincott commented that he

> was never able to obtain a hearing for his ideas which were in great conflict with the ideas of his age. He scandalized those who ruled the industrial system and those who spoke for it.{4}

General opinion during the early eighteen-fifties, however, held Ruskin to be bold and stimulating, worthy of serious consideration. A marked change in attitudes occurred when **The Political Economy of Art** appeared in 1857; moreover, some early works in which he touched on social, economic, and political considerations were severely criticized. The **Athenaeum**, the periodical most hostile to Ruskin's social pronouncements, described him as arrogant, dogmatic, intolerant, offensive, fanatical, disingenuous, inconsistent, fantastic, and impractical. The **Saturday Review**, though less insulting, held "that Ruskin was out of his depth as a social thinker."{5} Ruskin was always aware of the opposition to his ideas and he was neither idealistic nor naive about it; throughout his social writing he referred to the hostility of contemporary opinion. For example, in the second addendum to **A Joy For Ever** he wrote:

> I know well how strange, fanciful, or impracticable these suggestions will appear to most of the business men of this day; men who conceive the proper state of the world to be simply that of a vast and disorganized mob, scrambling each for what he can get, trampling

> down its children and old . . . .{6}

The nineteenth-century opposition to Ruskin's ideas can be explained as the reactions of men under attack; and Ruskin's attacks were vehemently insulting. But what of the trends of twentieth-century criticism?

A long-held bias, established by his contemporaries, assumes that Ruskin was out of his element when discussing social, economic, or political issues. Coupled with this bias is Ruskin's overshadowing fame as critic of the arts.{7} But Ruskin's tone and his prose style, his moral theories, and the monumental edition of his collected works in thirty-nine volumes{8} are also factors mentioned by critics who have tried to explain the fall in Ruskin's reputation. In **Ruskin Today** (1964), Kenneth Clark postulated Ruskin's stance, tone, and style as reasons for declining interest in his works. Ruskin was a moralizer; he not only judged his society, but he offered it advice and pertinent analogies based on Christian morality and Biblical associations. In Clark's view the rhythms of and quotations from the Bible (especially in **Modern Painters)** are embarrassing to the twentieth-century reader while the mixture of emotion and reason in Ruskin's purple patches does not conform to twentieth-century ideas about rational thought. However, only when he cited Ruskin's personality disorders and his mental illness did Clark reveal, and then unwittingly, a primary reason for the neglect and disapproval of the social writings.

Public interest in the details of Ruskin's personal life has long obscured his social voice. His defense of J. M. W. Turner, his marriage to Euphemia Chalmers Gray, his relationship to Rose la Touche, his libel against James MacNeill Whistler, and his mental breakdowns which ended in insanity during the final years of his life epitomize the major trend in criticism of Ruskin since the early thirties. This trend has been most damaging to serious evaluation and analysis of his work in the field of social criticism. In his introduction to **Ruskin Today** Kenneth Clark began: "No other writer, perhaps, has suffered so great a fall in reputation as Ruskin," adding that practically nothing remains of his reputation in any field "but a malicious interest in the story of his private life." Later in his introduction Clark allied himself with the trend to biographical criticism when he wrote that Ruskin's

> sense of analogy was corrupted by a real weakness of character, which may be described as a mixture of self-indulgence and arrogance . . . . often said to be a symptom of his mental decline.{9}

Gaylord C. LeRoy exemplified the worst kind of biographical criticism. He argued that because Ruskin experienced psychological problems, he was not suited to social thinking. In "Ruskin and the Condition of England," LeRoy contended that for the most part Ruskin was out of touch with the best thought of the nineteenth century, and that "many of Ruskin's ideas were products of psychopathology." LeRoy presented an even stranger mixture of biography and critical analysis in "John Ruskin: Interpretation of His Daily Maddening Rage."{10} He ended this article with the inane and totally inaccurate explanation that in despair Ruskin abandoned reform and retreated into the "Art for Art's Sake" movement. In fact, Ruskin, as his more careful readers know, supported the opposite school of aesthetic thought and affirmed that all art must have a moral purpose.

R. H. Wilenski started this unfortunate biographical trend with his study, **John Ruskin: An Introduction to Further Study of His Life and Work** (1933). Unlike earlier biographers,{11} Wilenski related Ruskin's emotional problems to the form and content of his writings. Though sympathetic, he pictured a Ruskin who was never really sane, and implied that in spite of his originality, little that he wrote can be taken at face value. He dismissed Ruskin's eclecticism, his unconventional format--for social criticism especially--and his application of moral theories to art and social policy as the thoughts and methods of a madman. Wilenski attempted to use Ruskin's psychological problems as an excuse for seemingly muddled and incoherent passages, while at the same time pointing out the strength and originality of Ruskin's ideas; however, his explanations suggest that Ruskin's ideas cannot possibly be valid because of his mental decline. Biographical criticism, emphasizing Ruskin's unhappy personal life and his mental breakdowns, unintentionally initiated by R. H. Wilenski's sympathetic study and fostered by subsequent editions of collected letters and diaries, surfeited research and scholarship on Ruskin throughout the thirties, forties, and fifties. Such studies continue to influence readers and scholars.

Wilenski's use of biographical information to explain Ruskin's style and to excuse his ideas finds its logical conclusions in several incisive studies published since 1975. In particular, Jay Fellows' **The Failing Distance: The Autobiographical Impulse in John Ruskin** (1975) underlines the relationship between the stylistic and thematic characteristics of Ruskin's works and the biographical details of his life. F. G. Townsend described Fellows' study as "the logical outgrowth of the line of inquiry opened in 1933 by R. H. Wilenski's **John Ruskin: An Introduction** . . . ." He added that "whether this line can be pursued further is, in the present state of our knowledge, doubtful."{12} Recent studies, nevertheless, do "pursue this line further." Jay Fellows' second book on Ruskin, **Ruskin's Maze: Mastery and Madness in His Art** (1981), and Raymond E. Fitch's **The Poison Sky: Myth and Apocalypse in Ruskin** (1982) extend a scholarly concern for biographical criticism to its felicitous limits. Both works connect Ruskin's style and content with the eclectic workings of his mind, tracing the thematic and mythical repetitions and the patterns of imagery in Ruskin's writings to indicate a relationship between their varied style and the varied mind of the author. Though these studies are not concerned specifically with the social criticism, they explain the methods by which Ruskin recorded his hopes, warnings, and fears.

Critical attention has been paid to the style more than to the ideas of Ruskin's social works. Though not emphasized in this study, the style of his social writings cannot be overlooked. Even when readers have disagreed with the arguments of Ruskin's criticism, they have admired and enjoyed his prose, his memorable use of analogy and digression, and of symbolism, imagery, allusion, and metaphor. R. Ironside, in his article, "The Art Criticism of John Ruskin," (**Horizon**, 1943), defined the strength of Ruskin's style, so often dismissed as rambling and unconnected. Ironside understood that the style is the essential medium for Ruskin's ideas. Marcel Proust had recognized this relationship between style and thought some twenty years before Ironside. Ruskin's ideas of invention, association, and involuntary recall are similar to developing literary ideas of the late nineteenth century, reflected in Proust's own writing. Proust was familiar with, wrote about, and translated into French many of Ruskin's works including the whole of **Modern Painters**. Since the nineteen-fifties several studies comparing Ruskin and Proust and indicating the influence of Ruskin's style on Proust's have appeared; for example, Jean Autret's **L'Influence de Ruskin sur la Vie, les Idées et l'Oeuvre de Marcel Proust** (1955). In a recent analysis of Ruskin's style, Nick Shrimpton singled out the use of extended images for rhetorical purposes as the mark of Ruskin's originality and genius in the realm of social criticism.{13} Ruskin's style is further heightened by an awareness of audience throughout the social writings, and by a tone which varies accordingly from the derogatory, sarcastic, and insulting to the conciliatory and sage-like.

John D. Rosenberg, in what is still the best explanation of Ruskin's style, wrote that in time "Ruskin will assume the place in English prose that Shakespeare holds in our poetry."{14} Ruskin, though, came to regret his masterful prose style which detracted from his ideas. In "Mystery of Life and Its Arts," he explained:

> I speak to you under [a] disadvantage . . . : namely, that I am not fully aware how far my audiences are disposed to give me credit for real knowledge of my subject, or how far they grant me attention only because I have been sometimes thought an ingenious or pleasant essayist upon it. For I have had what, in many respects, I boldly call the misfortune, to set my words sometimes prettily together; not without a foolish vanity . . . until I was heavily punished for this pride, by finding that many people thought of the words only, and cared nothing for their meaning. (XVIII, 145-46)

Although I note that Ruskin's style, the vehicle for conveying his social thought, is worthy of study on its own, I am more concerned with the ideas of the works of social criticism, with "their meaning," their context, their soundness, and their influence.

An increasing concern for Ruskin's ideas and the social relevance of Ruskin's life and works among critics is indicated in two recent biographies, Joan Abse's **John Ruskin: The Passionate Moralist** (1980) and John Dixon Hunt's **The Wider Sea: A Life of John Ruskin** (1982). Both works are indebted to John D. Rosenberg's **The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin's Genius** (1961) which combines an interest in biography with a sensitive and scholarly concern for the social as well as the aesthetic writings. Hunt, in his study, which he described as "an intellectual biography," went beyond the Wilenski emulators who "tended to perpetuate stereotyped views of [Ruskin's] life and work."{15} And Abse, sensitive to the pitfalls of Ruskin scholarship, included a word of advice to us all when she wrote:

> It is better, I fully admit, to read Ruskin in extract than not at all. But genius emasculated loses the aspect of genius and I would plead rather for the reader to seek out individual works and read them in their astonishing entirety. Only then can the full range and flavour of Ruskin's mind and the glorious richness of his prose be appreciated.{16}

Ruskin anticipated her in his "Preface" to the third edition of **The Stones of Venice** (1874):

> I republish this book . . . for the little pleasure which I hope it may yet give to the readers, few and uninfluential, who still read books through, and wish to understand them. (IX, 13-14)

Only by attending to the text as Hunt and Abse have done can either the style or content of Ruskin's social writings be properly assessed, appreciated, and understood.

In spite of the earlier biographical obsession and the irrational assumptions at the heart of much criticism of Ruskin, his social ideas were recognized as important in several studies appearing at the turn of the century. Frederic Harrison and John Atkinson Hobson, both social economists, wrote two of the most ardent. In his early study, **John Ruskin** (1902), Harrison devoted two chapters to Ruskin's social works. In an analysis of Harrison's criticism M. S. Vogeler explained that

> his aim was to synthesize materials at hand . . . . For Ruskin's economics he had studies by his own friends, Patrick Geddes, the town planner and sociologist . . . and J. A. Hobson.{17}

Vogeler pointed out that for his own generation Harrison defended Ruskin as an important social and aesthetic critic. Yet he feared that in the future Ruskin would be assessed in the same way as Plato, Dante, and the Bible. The "melody of the language, the inspiring poetry, and their apocalyptic visions," would be valued above their concrete teachings about man.{18} Here again is Ruskin's own fear.

The second study, Hobson's **John Ruskin: Social Reformer** (1898), is a full-length defense of Ruskin's social writings. Though it provides a foundation for further study, this text is little more than a paraphrase of Ruskin's ideas on a number of social issues. Hobson's individual chapters cover topics such as education, housing, and political beliefs. As John T. Fain pointed out in **Ruskin and the Economists**, "Hobson's book is indispensable to students of Ruskin because Hobson understands Ruskin's type of social economy, not because he has given an accurate and exhaustive critique of Ruskin's works."{19} Hobson's study, like other early studies of Ruskin's social writing, gives insufficient attention to the central social works and becomes far too general.{20}

An interest in and a concern for Ruskin's social ideas has appeared randomly since the studies by Hobson and Harrison. George Bernard Shaw's **Ruskin's Politics** (1921) and F. W. Roe's **Social Philosophy of Carlyle and Ruskin** (1921) are two sound explications of Ruskin's social works. In 1938 B. E. Lippincott included a chapter on Ruskin in **Victorian Critics of Democracy.** Though he paraphrased far too much, he analysed Ruskin's political thought without recourse to the biographical rationalization so deplorable in other explications. In the forties Fain's series of articles analyzing Ruskin's economic views appeared; in 1956 Fain published his collected articles in **Ruskin and the Economists.** Fain provided an economic perspective which allows the literary student to follow Ruskin's arguments with some awareness of the issues involved. Francis G. Townsend, in **Ruskin and the Landscape Feeling: A Critical Analysis of His Thought During the Crucial Years of His Life, 1843-56** (1951), indicated the beginnings of Ruskin's social directions in his earlier art writings. Though Townsend assessed the aesthetic criticism as the more important part of Ruskin's writing, he attended seriously to the social ideas themselves. Holbrook Jackson, in **Dreamers of Dreams: The Rise and Fall of Nineteenth-Century Idealism** (1957),{21} included Ruskin along with Carlyle, Morris, Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman in his study of writers' reactions to the political climate of the nineteenth century. In forty pages he discussed the social advice Ruskin offered in his major texts after 1860. Jackson suggested that

> had [Ruskin] possessed organizing ability as well as the vision to see and the power to explain he would have brought about a revolution which might have given a different and a better complexion to the years since his death in 1900.

And he concluded his examination of Ruskin's ideas with the tribute that

> Ruskin's social doctrines . . . [are] more useful to the present age than any other teaching that has survived the century he helped to make illustrious.{22}

Since Rosenberg's **The Darkening Glass** in 1961, several articles have contributed further to an understanding and an appreciation of Ruskin's social writings. A few examine the influence of Ruskin's ideas on political and social thinkers, for example, Douglas R. Cherry's "Ruskin--Unacknowledged Legislator of the Social Sciences" (1961) and Frank Daniel Curtin's "Aesthetics in English Social Reform: Ruskin and His Followers" (1968).{23}

Four notable studies of the social works have appeared since 1970. The first, **La Pensée Sociale de John Ruskin** (1972), by Philippe Jaudel is extremely ambitious and includes a thorough bibliography, index, and chronology of significant dates in Ruskin's life. Divided into four major sections, it provides a summary of Ruskin's life, of nineteenth-century ideologies, of the backgrounds to Ruskin's social themes, and of the social projects Ruskin became involved with later in his life. The Troisieme Partie, "L'Economie Humaine"--"Les Fondation" and "L'Edifice," most specifically deals with the social writings, though, like Hobson, Jaudel organized his discussion around subject headings rather than around the social texts themselves, an organization which encourages piecemeal reference to a number of works throughout his discussion. The second, James Clark Sherburne's **John Ruskin or the Ambiguities of Abundance: A Study in Social and Economic Criticism** (1972), traces the traditions to which Ruskin's social thought belongs and the influences it contributes. Like Hobson and Jaudel, Sherburne examined Ruskin's own ideas under subject headings, the only possible way in this instance to cope with such a mass of background material. His bibliography provides a major source for background reading. A third study, J. L. Spear's dissertation, "'Putting the Fire Out with the Sun': The Social Vision of John Ruskin" (Univ. of Minnesota, 1975) lacks coherence. Five discussions, beginning with an overview of Ruskin's life and ending with an examination of his relationship to Rose la Touche, are related only by Spear's thesis that Ruskin's vision, though personal, is coherent. One other book, **New Approaches to Ruskin: Thirteen Essays** (1981), indicates the myriad interest which Ruskin's writings promote. More than half of the essays examine the later social texts. This collection and the studies by Abse and Hunt suggest a possible renaissance of interest in Ruskin's social writings.{24} Some ten years ago David Delaura predicted growing attention to the social works. Commenting on the series of minor articles which appeared from 1940 to 1960, he wrote that

> in view of all the casual tribute to Ruskin as a critic of society, it is curious indeed that so little has been said about this side of his work in the last fifteen years.{25}

The few articles and serious studies of Ruskin's social thought are still not enough to counteract the adverse effect of the past century of criticism. Even some of the most highly respected studies of the religious, moral, and social ideas of nineteenth-century writers fail to include Ruskin: Basil Willey's **Nineteenth-Century Studies: Coleridge to Matthew Arnold** (1949), his **More Nineteenth-Century Studies: A Group of Honest Doubters** (1956), and John Holloway's **The Victorian Sage: Studies in Argument** (1953), all ignore Ruskin completely. As Delaura noted, the main response to Ruskin's social writing since Wilenski's study in 1933 has been a politely favourable recognition of his economic ideas. A recent study on the changes in the methodology and purpose of the social sciences at the turn of the century also ignores Ruskin's part. T. W. Heyck, reviewing Reba N. Soffer's 1978 study, **Ethics and Society in England: The Revolution in the Social Sciences, 1870-1914,** criticized this analysis of social change which

> neglects the great tradition of English social thought extending from Burke to Carlyle and Ruskin.{26}

This neglect is another indication of the lack of serious critical attention accorded to Ruskin's works of social criticism. Ill-founded and biased opinion continues to undervalue both the legitimacy and consequence of his ideas; an open-minded, close reading of Ruskin's primary texts would demolish much of this prejudice. Virginia Woolf reminded readers that

> we do him wrong if we take him merely as a prophet--a proceeding that is rather forced upon one by his followers, and forget to read his books.{27}

As the record of one thinker's response to changes initiated by the emergence of the urban-industrial society, Ruskin's social criticism merits close reading and analyses based on its ideas, on its relevance to the rest of his writing career, and on its influence on the thought of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

However, when analyzing Ruskin's works or those by any writer working in the realm of social criticism, we must include judgment as part of our analysis. In the preface of his book, **Literature and Politics in the Nineteenth Century** (1971), John Lucas asserted that the political ideas of the "great nineteenth-century writers" may be well or badly handled but, more importantly, "there remains the question of whether they are good or bad ideas."{28} Some of Ruskin's ideas are "bad": some excessively idealistic (relying on a strong moral nature in *all* men); others dangerous (pointing the way to the fascism of Benito Mussolini and the Naziism of Adolf Hitler). Of Ruskin's idealistic vision of mankind, Hobson wrote:

> it is surely no cynicism to insist that the process of putting "honesty", not into exceptional members but into a sufficient proportion of the captains of industry to revolutionize the conduct of business, is utterly chimerical.

And he added that Ruskin's

> reliance on the voluntary conversion of the ruling classes, is a radical defect of his social thinking, and ultimately rests as all such errors must, upon a moral obliquity.{29}

In view of his impossibly high expectations of mankind, Ruskin's despair was inevitable. As for the danger of his ideas, Ruskin, like Carlyle, held democracy in contempt and supported an authoritarian form of government with a system of clear and conscious hierarchies.{30} Idealism prevented his foreseeing twentieth-century totalitarianism in its various manifestations.

But many of Ruskin's ideas are "good" and have beneficially affected political and sociological developments, especially in terms of socialist thought and action. In his classic exposition of **English Thought in the Nineteenth-Century** (1929), D. C. Somervell discussed Ruskin in the context of socialist thought, comparing him to William Cobbett who also saw the people of England as the victims of a combination of political systems, profiteering manufacturers, and pseudo-scientific Malthusians. Somervell, though, pointed out the major difference between Cobbett's and Ruskin's approaches to thwarting this victimization. While Cobbett attempted to prevent industrialization, Ruskin

> had schemes for the organization of an inevitably industrialized society, and while some of these schemes are whimsical in the extreme, others are now accepted facts. Ruskin recommended old age pensions, public provision of housing, a state provision against unemployment, and the organized purification of the atmosphere by the control of factory smoke . . . . In his demand that public authority should step in to remedy the evils resulting from private enterprise he anticipated in many particulars the programmes of the socialists.{31}

These "schemes," representative of Ruskin's "good" ideas, are common policy in our own society. Many of the changes he called for were reasonable and justified, many of his warnings prophetic. In spite of attacks from the press and from his peers, Ruskin's advocacy of government responsibility, and his condemnation of competition as the motivating force for the economy had its effect on thinkers and writers in various fields of social investigation. Urban planner Patrick Geddes and social economist John A. Hobson both acknowledged his influence in their respective areas of study. William Morris and George Bernard Shaw extended Ruskin's influence on their own ideas to the ideas of various socialist groups including the Fabians, and the Scottish Labour Party. Clement R. Atlee and Mahatma Gandhi both made references to Ruskin's influence in their autobiographies. Hobson called him the greatest teacher of his age,

> not merely because he has told the largest number of important truths upon the largest variety of vital matters . . . but because he has made the most powerful and the most felicitous attempt to grasp and to express, as a comprehensive whole, the needs of a human society and the processes of social reform.{32}

In concluding this survey of Ruskinian scholarship and in opening this defense of Ruskin's social writings, I do not dismiss the psychological problems Ruskin experienced throughout his life. Nor did he himself. Not only was Ruskin conscious of the probable reaction to public knowledge of his illness; he seemed to anticipate the twentieth-century bias. He referred to his psychological illness nowhere more lucidly than in Letter 88 (1880) of **Fors Clavigera.** Ruskin wrote that while he regretted the mental crisis of the previous two years because it had interrupted his work and pained his friends, he lamented his illness

> much more . . . [because it made] them more doubtful than they used to be (which, for some, is saying a good deal) of the "truth and soberness" of **Fors** itself. Throughout every syllable of which, hitherto written, the reader will find one consistent purpose, and perfectly conceived system . . . ; including in its balance one vast department of human skill,--the arts,--which vulgar economists are wholly incapable of weighing; and yet more vast realm of human enjoyment--spiritual affections,--which materialist thinkers are alike incapable of imagining; a system not mine, nor Kant's, nor Comte's;--but that which Heaven has taught every true man's heart. (XXIX, 382-83)

Written very near the end of his active career, this letter represents not a man incapable of rational thought, but one conscious of his weaknesses, and yet still sincere and sure about his ideas. His fits of depression, which were more frequent later in his life, and his inability to form close emotional and physical relationships with other men and women certainly affected his work. As Wilenski had hoped, a recognition of these problems helps to explain Ruskin's inability to work closely with others, to organize, or to lead, which resulted in his failure to achieve practical changes in his own society.{33} And his inability to form stable relationships induced his periods of depression; **Fors Clavigera** and **Praeterita** contain numerous references to the overpowering emptiness and loneliness in his life. But Ruskin's emotional and psychological problems, no matter how obvious, do not discount the value of his writings; John Ruskin's works stand as the best proof of this view. His purpose as a social critic remained consistent to the last of his writings: to inculcate in society a sense of social responsibility and affection, and to counter the popular notions of competition and *laissez-faire*

> I neither wish to please you, nor displease you; but to provoke you to think; to lead you to think accurately; and help you to form, perhaps, some different opinions from those you have now.
> (**Fors**, Letter 6(1871); XXVII, 98-99)

Notes

1. John A. Hobson, "Preface," to **John Ruskin: Social Reformer** (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1898), p. vii.

2. Robert Kimbrough's article, "Calm Between Crises: Pattern and Direction in Ruskin's Mature Thought," in **British Victorian Literature: Recent Revaluations,** ed. Shiv K. Kumar (New York: Univ. Pr., 1969), pp. 345-56, gives a coherent summary of Ruskin's general philosophy which is moral (esp. pp. 347-49). Ruskin believed that morality is an "instinct in the hearts of all civilized men" (XX, 268). Ruskin's is, Kimbrough explained "a traditional humanist concept [with] the belief that man was born fundamentally good and pure" (p. 347). More specifically, Kimbrough wrote that "Ruskin's philosophy of life was: know that you are basically good, pure, and noble and that, by following the laws of love and obeying the laws of universal order, you may become Good, Noble, and Great" (p. 348).

3. Graham Hough, "Preface," to **The Last Romantics** (London: Duckworth and Co., 1949), p. vii.

4. Benjamin Evans Lippincott, **Victorian Critics of Democracy: Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, Stephen, Maine, Lecky** (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Pr., 1938), p. 57.

5. J. D. Jump, "Ruskin's Reputation in the Eighteen-Fifties: The Evidence of the Three Principal Weeklies," **PMLA**, 63 (June, 1948), 681.

6. John Ruskin, "Right to Public Support," Addenda 2, **A Joy For Ever**, in **The Works of John Ruskin**, eds. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, Library Edition, Vol. XVI (London: George Allen, 1903-12), 114-15. Once the title of a work is identified, the volume and page numbers are given in reference to its location in the **Works** edition. This information is separated by a semi-colon from the title and any other necessary bibliographical information. The above footnote rewritten accordingly is: "Right to Public Support," **A Joy For Ever**; XVI, 114-15.

7. However, like his social criticism, Ruskin's aesthetic thought suffered a period of disfavour. By the end of the nineteen-forties, though, his art works were again read and given the serious attention they deserve. Some of the best studies of Ruskin's aesthetic thought are: Francis G. Townsend's **Ruskin and the Landscape**

Feeling: A Critical Analysis of His Thought During the Crucial Years of His Life, 1843-1860 (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Pr., 1951); the four Van Akin Burd articles which appeared from 1953 to 1959; Henry Ladd's **The Victorian Morality of Art: An Analysis of Ruskin's Aesthetic** (New York: Octagon Books, 1968); and George P. Landow's **The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin** (New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Pr., 1971).

8. Any argument postulating the **Works** edition as cause for the decline in Ruskin's reputation overlooks the numerous other editions and anthologies that have gone out of print. It is extremely frustrating for teacher and student alike that so little of Ruskin is in print. John D. Rosenberg's **The Genius of John Ruskin** (London: Allen and Unwin, 1963) and Matthew Hodgart's **Selected Prose of Ruskin** (New York: New American Library, 1972) have both been discontinued.

9. Kenneth Clark, ed., **Ruskin Today** (Hammondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), p. xiii.

10. Gaylord C. LeRoy, "Ruskin and 'The Condition of England'," **South Atlantic Quarterly**, 47 (October, 1948), 534-48; and "John Ruskin: An Interpretation of His 'Daily Maddening Rage'," **Modern Language Quarterly**, 10 (March, 1949), 81-88.

11. E. T. Cook, **The Life of John Ruskin**, 2 vols. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1911) and W. G. Collingwood, **The Life of John Ruskin**, rev. 1905 (London: Methuen, 1900).

12. Francis G. Townsend, "Review of **The Failing Distance: The Autobiographical Impulse in John Ruskin**," **Modern Philology**, 77 (August, 1979), 109.

13. Nick Shrimpton, "'Rust and Dust': Ruskin's Pivotal Work," in **New Approaches to Ruskin: Thirteen Essays**, ed. Robert Hewison (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 51-67. Shrimpton presented a novel version of the transition in Ruskin's career. He noted that Ruskin's own style, especially "the marriage of poetry and social criticism," represents the true transition in his writing. He analyzed Ruskin's lecture, "The Work of Iron, in Nature, Art, and Policy" (Feb. 16, 1858), in which Ruskin used symbolism in two ways: the first to discover social lessons in natural detail as done in **Modern Painters**; and the second, as a rhetorical technique, deploying it to attract and persuade his readers" (p. 58). The use of symbolism and other poetic devices for argument stands as Ruskin's mark in the field of social criticism, according to this most interesting

analysis by Shrimpton.

14. John D. Rosenberg, "Style and Sensibility in Ruskin's Prose," in **The Art of Victorian Prose,** eds. George Levine and William Madden (London: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1968), p. 177. See Rosenberg's more recent article, "Ruskin's Benediction: A Reading of Fors Clavigera," in **New Approaches,** ed. Hewison, pp. 125-41. This articulate and sensitive explication of **Fors,** Letter 20 (1872), indicates the kind of attention Ruskin's style deserves.

15. John Hunt, **The Wider Sea: A Life of John Ruskin** (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1982), p. ix.

16. Joan Abse, "Foreword," to **John Ruskin: The Passionate Moralist** (London; Melbourne; New York: Quartet Books, 1980), p. 12.

17. Martha S. Vogeler, "Frederic Harrison and John Ruskin: The Limits of Positivist Biography," **Texas Quarterly,** 18 (1975), 94.

18. Vogeler, p. 92. The location of the Harrison quotation is given as "Ruskin as Prophet," in **Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill,** pp. 77-110; rpt. "Unto This Last: the Influence of Ruskin," in **Nineteenth Century,** 38 (December, 1895), 958-74.

19. John T. Fain, **Ruskin and the Economists** (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt Univ. Pr., 1956), p. 96.

20. Three notable early studies are E. T. Cook's **Studies in Ruskin: Some Aspects of the Work and Teaching of John Ruskin** (1890 rpt.; Philadelphia: Richard West, 1973); J. Marshall Mather's **John Ruskin: His Life and Teaching** (1903 rpt.; New York: Haskell House, 1972); and J. S. Montgomery's **John Ruskin: The Voice of the New Age** (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1902).

21. Holbrook Jackson, **Dreamers of Dreams: The Rise and Fall of Nineteenth-Century Idealism** (New York: Farrar, Straus & Co., 1957), borrowed the title for this study from a Biblical allusion (Bk. of Job: ii, 28) made by Ruskin in **Queen of the Air** (1869):

> The thing which no merely historical investigation can understand, or even believe . . . belongs exclusively to the creative or artistic group of men, and can only be interpreted by those of their race, who themselves in some measure also see visions and dream dreams. (XIX, 309)

22. Jackson, **Dreamers of Dreams**, pp. 99 and 133.

23. Douglas R. Cherry, "Ruskin: Unacknowledged Legislator of the Social Sciences," in **Thought from the Learned Societies of Canada 1961** (Toronto: W. J. Gage Ltd., 1961) and Frank Daniel Curtin, "Aesthetics in Social Reform: Ruskin and His Followers," in **Nineteenth-Century Studies** (New York: Cornell Univ. Pr., 1940). Both articles are referred to in Chapter Five of this study: "The Influence of Ruskin's Social Thought."

24. Certainly a Ruskin Renaissance is in motion. In the past few years more than ten books have appeared on Ruskin. However, none of these new studies deals in the main with Ruskin's social writings. In addition to the Hewison collection of essays are two others: **The Ruskin Polygon**, eds. John Dixon Hunt and Faith M. Holland (Manchester: Univ. Pr., 1983) and **Studies in Ruskin: Essays in Honor of Van Akin Burd**, eds. Robert Rhodes and Del Ivan Janik (Ohio: Univ. Pr., 1982). Interests in his writings on art and architecture continue in Elizabeth K. Helsinger's **Ruskin and the Art of the Beholder** (Harvard Univ. Pr., 1982) and Eve Blau's **Ruskinian Gothic: The Architecture of Deane and Woodward, 1845-1861** (Princeton: Univ. Pr., 1983). Biographical interest is maintained in three new volumes: George Allan Cate, ed., **The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin** (Stanford: Univ. Pr., 1982); John Hayman, ed., **Letters from the Continent 1858** (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Pr., 1982); and Jeanne Clegg, **Ruskin and Venice** (London: Junction Books, 1983). These studies along with the already mentioned works by Abse (1980), Hunt (1982), Fellows (1982), and Fitch (1982) indicate an ever-increasing readership for Ruskin and a growing scholarly appreciation for his works.

25. David Delaura, **Victorian Prose, A Guide to Research** (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1973), p. 235.

26. T. W. Heyck, "Review of **Ethics and Society in England: The Revolution in the Social Sciences, 1870-1914**, by Reba N. Soffer (Berkley: University of California Press, 1978)," **Victorian Studies**, 22 (Summer, 1979), 466-67.

27. Virginia Woolf, "Ruskin," in **The Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays** (London: The Hogarth Pr., 1950), p. 51. The exact date of this essay is unknown.

28. John Lucas, ed., **Literature and Politics in the Nineteenth Century: Essays** (London: Methuen and Co., 1971), p. 3. This text and the following two are

excellent studies which examine literature and politics jointly: Raymond Chapman, **The Victorian Debate: English Literature and Society 1832-1901** (New York: Basic Books, 1968); and George Watson, **The English Ideology: Studies in the Language of Victorian Politics** (Britain: Allen Lane, 1973).

29. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, pp. 198 and 204.

30. See Appendix I of this study: "Ruskin's Position on Democracy."

31. D. C. Somervell, **English Thought in the Nineteenth Century** (London: Methuen and Co., 1929), p. 153. For an account of Cobbett's influence on Ruskin, Carlyle, and Morris read Charles Kegel's "William Cobbett and Malthusianism," **Journal of the History of Ideas**, 19 (1958), 348-62.

32. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, p. v.

33. One must keep in mind, however, that after 1850 it was not so much what people did (as with Owen and the Chartists, for example, in the early part of the century), but what they wrote (John Stuart Mill, Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, and John Ruskin, for example) that was important to change. The reasons for this switch are many: a higher degree of literacy; cheaper printing costs; and improvements in communications and transportation, all allowing for easier comparisons between government practices and a rise, therefore, in a general political awareness. Men and women from all segments of society were expressing their hopes, fears, and demands, and they were organizing in order to do so. The social and political writers of the time were read, listened to, discussed, and followed.

CHAPTER II

Ruskin's Social Thought:
The Philosophical and Historical Context

John Ruskin's social thought represents a response to the philosophical debates and historical developments of the Victorian Period. An account of empiricism and transcendentalism, the two prominent movements of thought, and a synopsis of the social-political change, initiated in a large part by the Industrial Revolution, firmly establish his contribution to nineteenth-century social criticism. His social writings, motivated by conscience and humanitarian concern, attack the social, economic, and political doctrines of the day. More specifically, they express the opinions, hopes, and fears of one side of an argument reacting against the emergence in the seventeen-seventies of a school of economic thought--a school which quickly aligned itself with an empirical and utilitarian philosophical position. The theories of these writers, who are called either the "classical political economists" or "the philosophical radicals," influenced, through *laissez-faire* rationalizing, the social and political decisions of the next one hundred years. These theories, however, provoked the reaction of the transcendental-evangelical thinkers, who argued for government intervention in and responsibility for the social and economic affairs of the nation. John Ruskin championed this reaction in his fight for social improvement for all members of society.

It is, of course, impossible to categorize all directions of reform and reaction at the beginning of the nineteenth century into two simply opposed schools of thought; yet two schools clearly existed and most major movements for reform were linked, however tenuously, to one or the other. The two primary schools which contributed to the evolution of Britain's social, economic, and political thought were most accurately associated with the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and the transcendentalism of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). John Stuart Mill acknowledged these two thinkers as "the teachers of the teachers" in a magnificent tribute which opens his essay on "Bentham":

> there is hardly to be found in England an individual of any importance in the world of mind, who (whatever opinions he may have afterwards adopted) did not first learn to think from one of these two; and though their influences have but begun to diffuse themselves through these intermediate channels over society at large, there is already scarcely a publication of any consequence, addressed to the educated classes, which, if these persons had not existed, would not have been different from what it is. These men are Jeremy Bentham and Samuel Taylor Coleridge--the two great seminal minds of England in their age.{1}

The philosophies of Bentham and Coleridge represent conflicting visions of society and conflicting ideas about the function of government in the nineteenth century. While the utilitarian-Benthamite stream views society as atomistic, with the role of government being to build fences of law around individuals to protect man from man and from the power of the State, the transcendental-Coleridgian school pictures society as an organism in which the individual wants to share his life with others and in which learning and well-being are nourished by the State. Isolating individualism, unbridled competition, a minimum of legislative restriction, and the cure-all effects of enlightened self-interest characterize the atomistic argument; a realized commonwealth, co-operation, government responsibility, and the need to reform the heart according to the Christian ethic and to accept personal responsibility for others define the organic position.

The utilitarian philosophy is associated with the *laissez-faire* position implicit in the writings of Adam Smith (1723-90), Thomas R. Malthus (1776-1834), and David Ricardo (1772-1832) which established economic doctrine some years before Bentham's philosophical position was popularized.{2} Arguments from the works of Smith, Malthus, and Ricardo, together with the utilitarian philosophy of Bentham, support self-interest as opposed to moral responsibility as the basis for social, economic, and political decision-making. Their works, used to justify the growing opposition between those who benefited and those who suffered from the emerging industrial society, initiated the *laissez-faire* direction of nineteenth-century social and economic thought. The underlying premises of their works were repeatedly taken out of context to defend irresponsible legislative action during the eighteen hundreds. Ruskin, throughout his social texts, condemned these economic writers whose principles became the nineteenth-century rationalizations against legislative reforms.

Nineteenth-century *laissez-faire* policy and rationalization germinated in Adam Smith's **Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations** (1776) and Thomas Malthus' **Essay on the Principles of Population** (1789). Both works were referred to extensively by legislators and industrialists during the Victorian Period; both were also harshly criticized, and their authors denounced, for example, by Thomas Carlyle and Charles Dickens, as well as by John Ruskin.

At a time of economic difficulty in England, Smith's **Wealth of Nations** called for the reorganization of England's economy, by eliminating restrictions in matters of trade, production, and costs. Anticipating Bentham, Adam Smith defined self-interest as the greatest motivating factor in determining a nation's economic health. On this point Ruskin never tired of chastising Smith and the political economists who supported him. In Letter 62 of **Fors Clavigera** (1876), he ridiculed those who followed

> Adam Smith [who] formally, in the name of the philosophers of Scotland and England . . . declared that all men 'naturally' desired their neighbours' goods; and that in the name of Covetousness, all the nations of the earth should be blessed. (XXVIII, 516)

Smith argued for the existence of a "natural" law of economic growth, free of all restrictions, and based his proposals for free trade and economic individualism on this central premise. He described the "laws" of supply and demand, which long blocked wage and employment regulations in Britain. In a synopsis of **Wealth of Nations**, Richard D. Altick explained:

> Smith argued that the market should be protected from all kinds of intervention in order that economic laws might have free play. The competition generated by every man's effort to serve his self-interest--the profit motive--automatically controlled prices . . . .
>
> Unrestricted competition was the key to the common wealth, in the original sense of the term. The secret of the comforting attraction laissez-faire had for the early Victorian mind lay in the premise that somehow "nature" had arranged that the prosperity of the individual--he who won out in the eternal competition of the marketplace--would automatically result in the public good.{3}

In addition to pressing for economic reorganization, Adam Smith argued for the reorganization of labour. He championed the "division of labour" to increase efficiency, production, and profits--at the expense, as Carlyle, Ruskin, Engels, and, in the twentieth century, Eric Fromm argued, of man's happiness. The immediate effect of Smith's **Wealth of Nations** appeared in William

Pitt's budgets of 1784 and 1787, which freed trade from all restraints. The longer term effects appeared in the *laissez-faire* rationalizations of the next century.

In his **Essay on the Principle of Population**, Malthus reinforced the "let alone" doctrine from a different position. He attempted to prove the inevitability of poverty by subscribing to a mathematical ratio. On the supposition that population grows geometrically (1 2 4 8 16 . . . .) while subsistence grows arithmetically (1 2 3 4 5 . . . .), Malthus concluded that population growth must be checked. He described the natural checks as including disasters such as disease, war, and famine (a list extended to include extreme poverty, severe labour, and poor living conditions). The primary preventative check, according to Malthus' euphemism, is moral restraint, or the postponement of marriage by those who are not sure that they can support children.

Malthus wrote the essay to attack Godwin's theory of perfectibility through political justice. Unlike Godwin, he did not argue for legislative action to improve social circumstances. In his analysis of **The Malthusian Controversy**, Kenneth Smith suggested that Malthus was not so much concerned with a scientific theory of the growth of population as with an argument against social policy. The **Essay on Population** appeared in just the right form at just the right time for men who wanted a rationale for removing the burden of support for the poor. Malthus made the poor responsible for their own starvation, but, as Kenneth Smith documented, this essay did not escape debate in the nineteenth century: the validity of the ratios was questioned; he was accused of undervaluing mankind; his support of the fatalistic or natural checks was severely condemned. In Book II of his study, Kenneth Smith quoted Hazlitt's remark that "the essence of Malthus' approach to the poor laws is that by the laws of God and nature, the rich have a right to starve the poor whenever they cannot maintain themselves."{4} This denial of responsibility for the social condition by the political bodies and the private individuals who constitute "the rich" became the basis for Ruskin's criticism of Smith's **Wealth of Nations** and Malthus' **Essay on Population.**

Political and economic thinking of the kind begun by Smith and Malthus continued in the early nineteenth century in David Ricardo's **Principle of Political Economy and Taxation** (1817). Ricardo constructed a Law of Wages and a Law of Profits on Malthus' principle of population. As Elie Halevy explained, "according to this law [of wages], the amount of wages received by the labourer, the natural price of his labour, is the amount necessary to enable him to subsist and to perpetuate his species 'without increase or diminution.'"{5} The implication that these economic theories are based on natural laws continued well into the century and gained new impetus with the emergence of Darwinian thought. Pseudo-Darwinian thought, based on a false analogy between the biological and social spheres, encouraged the dangerous application of Darwinian theory, the theory of the survival of the fittest, to ideas of *laissez-faire* and to the promotion of unlimited competition. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) most perversely applied Darwinian conceptions to the social sciences. He championed the extreme doctrines of *laissez-faire* in **Man versus the State** (1884) and **The Principles of Ethics** (1891-93). In these works, as in other pseudo-Darwinian speculations, the survival of the fittest means survival of the best, and evolution is equated with progress. T. H. Huxley, in "Evolution and Ethics" (1893), attacked Spencer's conclusion. Like Ruskin, he asserted that progress comes, not from unchecked evolution, but from education and reform.

Ricardo's Law was used as an argument against higher wages on the ground that a higher level of subsistence results in an increase in the population. And, according to the Law of Profits, which in its most simplified form states that optimum profits are reaped when population reaches its natural level for the land, an unnatural increase in population means less profit for capitalists. Ricardo's laws, linked by their arguments to Malthus' theories, further substantiated the need to limit population. The main method of control for nineteenth-century England, according to these economists, continued to be a general lack of aid to the needy--in short, starvation.

These theories of self-interest, economic individualism, and freedom in the market place were incorporated into what Halevy described as "an entire system of philosophy whose action upon British public opinion would be profound and lasting, the philosophy of Bentham and his school."{6} Though published in 1789, that major document of utilitarianism, Bentham's **Principles of Morals and Legislation**, was relatively unnoticed until the second decade of the eighteen-hundreds when, through his association with James Mill (begun in 1808), Bentham started to gain recognition. Once Mill began propagating Bentham's philosophy, a school of disciples, including Ricardo, quickly developed. At a time when social, economic, and political institutions of Britain were under scrutiny, Benthamism formed the calculating rational position in the by then growing debate with, on the opposing side, the emotional reaction of evangelical reformers and philanthropists.

The common philosophic principles on which the Utilitarians built their political economy and social beliefs are outlined in Bentham's **Deontology**, edited by his disciple John Bowring (1834).{7} Bentham asserted that the fundamental law of human action is self-interest; man seeks pleasure and avoids pain. Benthamism describes actions as virtuous or vicious according to the amount of pleasure or pain they produce. In his **Introduction to the**

Principles of Morals and Legislation, he stated that the goal of all law, then, is to ensure the most pleasure for the most people, "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." All actions, Bentham explained, must be judged on the basis of the pleasure or pain, which are equated with good and evil, that they produce. By means of the "felicific calculus" or "moral arithmetic" any personal or social action can be judged. Bentham provided a formula and a table cataloguing pleasures and pains to be used in the judgement of deeds and laws. But utilitarianism, as Altick pointed out, "made no allowance for the prompting of conscience, or for the humane impulses of which the Shaftesburyan ethic had made so much a century earlier,"{8} and of which Ruskin also was to make so much, later in the century. Conscience, a sense of duty, and the pleasure of doing good for its own sake have no place in Bentham's list of pleasurable motivations for action.

Bentham's beneficial contributions to the legal and educational systems in nineteenth-century Britain developed from his philosophical acceptance of the pleasure-pain principle. By association man must be taught to expect pain for socially unacceptable behavior. Laws must not only promote general happiness, explained the Benthamite, but also protect one individual's happiness from another's selfish interests. At this point Bentham moved beyond the mere *laissez-faire* position of his predecessors. Though the empirical and romantic visions of Bentham and Coleridge had established by the eighteen-forties the two opposing characteristics of political development--*laissez-faire* and state intervention--the philosophies behind both schools of thought support reforms. Nineteenth-century disagreement between them centred on questions about what to reform, the reasons for reforms, and the methods to achieve reforms. Bentham, in his arguments for legislative measures and reform, not based on the Christian ethics and moral responsibility of thinkers like Ruskin and Carlyle, supported an atomistic vision of self-interested human beings, based instead on Hobbesian assumptions. In his discussion of Bentham's position, Basil Willey paraphrased:

> Each man seeks his own interest at the expense of others, and governors will seek to exploit their subjects and defend their own 'sinister' monopolies which shall direct each man's egoism into social channels, and make it contrary to his *self*-interest to injure his fellows. Precisely because the benevolent sympathies are weaker than self-interest, the appeal of every moral injunction and every law must be to self-interest.{9}

Accordingly, utilitarianism involves no principle transcending sensible experience, nor does it invoke any supernatural or Christian belief. As Willey concluded, "in the absence of altruism or ethical imperatives it is hard to see how the machine could be made to grind out the general happiness." The irony of utilitarianism resides in the fact that although Bentham's aim was to secure the greatest happiness for the greatest number, his philosophy encouraged the harshest of nineteenth-century social and economic policies.

The utilitarian philosophy, coupled with the *laissez-faire* doctrine implicit in the writings of Adam Smith, Malthus, and Ricardo, was strongly opposed by Coleridge and Carlyle, the English representatives of German transcendentalism. By the end of the eighteenth century John Wesley (1703-91), while fighting the stream--empirical and materialistic--that produced Bentham and his successors, called for a change of heart and a return to Christian ethics. Though not a transcendentalist himself, Welsey prepared the ground for Coleridge, Carlyle, and Ruskin. By the eighteen-twenties Coleridge established the major reaction against the rational utilitarian position. Coleridge anticipated Carlyle and Ruskin in his stress on finding the higher truths and needs of all people. In **The Constitution of Church and State** (1829) he expressed his mature political views by proposing that the goal of society must include developing "good life" and improving the members of that society; and that the pursuit of worldly wealth, the methods of competition, and the utilitarian *laissez-faire* notions must give way to a co-operative attempt at attaining such a life.{10} His political views are religious in the sense that they transcend the material and the visible in life. Unlike the utilitarian belief that politics must be based on practical experience, the transcendentalist believes in morality and the existence of truth beyond man's own rational capabilities. While the utilitarian judges the good or evil of an action or a law by the pleasure or pain it produces, the transcendentalist measures the same action or law against an absolute standard of morality. There is no clearer voice of this opposition than that of Herr Diogenes Teufelsdrockh, the German philosopher of Carlyle's **Sartor Resartus**, who rebukes the utilitarian:

> Foolish Word-monger and Motive-grinder, who in thy Logic-mill hast an earthly mechanism for the Godlike itself, and wouldst fain grind me out Virtue from the husks of Pleasure,--I tell thee, Nay!

Through Teufelsdrockh, Carlyle asserted that "there is in man a Higher than love of Happiness: he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness! . . . Love not Pleasure; love God. This is the Everlasting Yea."{11} Like Carlyle, Ruskin, too, defended the Coleridgian dictum against utilitarianism; in Ruskin's social criticism, though, transcendental assumptions, move from the philosophical to the practical.

Though the effects of the social and economic ideas of the utilitarians prompted a humanitarian response from writers such as Ruskin, the effects of the first Industrial Revolution more than any other cause ignited the social conscience of many nineteenth-century writers.{12} In conjunction with a sharp and steady increase in population, it precipitated a social and economic revolution which totally changed living and working conditions in Britain for most of its people.

Wide-spread social distress and economic upheaval, early nineteenth-century results of the Revolution, produced what came to be called "the condition of England question," which confronted thinkers, writers, philanthropists, and reformers from beginning to end of the century. Thomas Carlyle coined the phrase in the opening of **Past and Present** (1843); like many other writers, he was appalled at the extremes of wealth and poverty in what appeared to be a rich industrial nation:

> The condition of England, on which many pamphlets are now in the course of publication, and many thoughts unpublished are going on in every reflective head, is justly regarded as one of the most ominous, and withal one of the strangest, ever seen in this world. England is full of wealth, of multifarious produce, supply for human want in every kind; yet England is dying of inanition.{13}

Carlyle's writing, with that of such novelists as Charles Dickens and Mrs. Gaskell, and essayists such as Matthew Arnold and Ruskin himself, forms what R. M. Hartwell defined as "the literary opposition to the industrial revolution." Hartwell described such reactions as "partly aesthetic and romantic, partly moral and humanitarian, and partly political; they objected to the ugliness and squalor of the urban-industrial as compared with the rural-agricultural life; they objected also to its motivating spirit and to the 'oppression' it brought with it."{14} In concluding that during the nineteenth century the literary response was one of feeling rather than of statistics, Hartwell arrived at the original nineteenth-century opposition between romanticism and empiricism.

There is certainly room for debate about the consequences of the industrial revolution. Contemporary accounts and recent historical analyses offer both optimistic and pessimistic interpretations. For example, Hartwell, in the article just referred to, surveyed these conflicting interpretations and offered reasons for the differences. On the one hand, early twentieth-century social historians, the Hammonds and the Webbs{15} and Arnold Toynbee, painted a dismal picture of the working classes. T. B. Macaulay, on the other hand, offered enthusiastic descriptions of industrialization in his historical study of the period;{16} however, his study cracks under the weight of a Whig interpretation more concerned with stressing political improvements than with examining industrial problems. The early social pessimism was not questioned until the appearance of economic histories in the nineteen-twenties. Sir John Harold Clapham, in **Economic History of Modern Britain** (1926), used statistics on wages and prices to support an optimistic interpretation of the industrial revolution; opinion among historians has followed his interpretation closely. Because statistics and production indexes have indicated an "unambiguous increase in the average standard of life" and have proved an increase in the Gross National Product during the nineteenth-century,{17} the Industrial Revolution has escaped the condemnations of the Webbs and the Hammonds. Though it is important to move beyond total denigration of industrialism, it is as important to remember that the sufferings of men and women in Victorian England do not disappear because of statistical graphs with upward curves. The dismal condition of the lower classes--their poverty and their living and working conditions--is attested to in articles from all the major nineteenth-century periodicals. A large selection of the best of these has been collected and published in **Victorian Social Conscience** (1973), twenty-one volumes of selected articles from **The Edinburgh Review, The Westminister Review, The Quarterly Review, Blackwood's Magazine,** and **Frazer's Magazine** from 1802 to 1870. The articles are organized by topic and the volumes, which are titled accordingly, begin with comprehensive introductions. Especially relevant to assessing the effects of industrialism on the populace are: **Poverty in the Victorian Age** (4 vols.); **The Working Classes in the Victorian Age** (4 vols.); **Urban Problems in the Victorian Age** (2 vols.); **Public Health in the Victorian Age** (1 vol.); and **Working Conditions in the Victorian Age** (1 vol.). These articles draw attention to the suffering--physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual--experienced by the lower classes.

An article on "Labourers' Homes," in **The Quarterly Review** (1860), for example, describes the town dwellings of the poor:

> No array of statistics, no sanitary reports, no highly-coloured descriptions . . . can convey an adequate conception of the horror of the gregarious life of the poorest of our town population to those who have never visited the haunts themselves. [These] . . . seedplots of every disease moral and physical, often [touch] the very hem of the purple and fine linen of their lordly neighbours.{18}

Ruskin, Carlyle, and Dickens in the nineteenth-century and the Hammonds and the Webbs in the twentieth all witnessed the suffering of displaced and unskilled workers, and all recognized the increasing wealth of landowners, capitalists, and industrialists.

Whatever view is taken of the eighteenth-century rise of industrialism, the fact remains that social and economic changes resulted almost immediately. An industrial revolution by definition implies economic reorganization. Phyllis Deane, in **The First Industrial Revolution** (1965), listed changes in the methods of economic organization which occurred simultaneously with what is called industrialism: for example, the movement of population from rural to urban communities; the enlargement and depersonalization of the typical unit of production based less on the family and more on the corporate enterprise; the intensive and extensive use of capital resources as a substitute for human effort; the emergence of new social and occupational classes determined by ownership of or relationship to means of production other than land, namely capital; the systematic application of modern science and empirical knowledge to the process of production.{19}

Social dislocation, and social and economic problems followed. The groups most immediately affected were the cotton spinners and handloom weavers who quickly became obsolete with the introduction of the spinning Jenny and other machinery. The early Regency disturbances, especially the Luddite riots (1811-16) and the Peterloo Massacre (1816) were results of the unrest of the labouring poor in the face of industrialism; this discontent surfaced in Chartism and matured in the later trade union movement. Working conditions in factories and mines were the principal targets of reform and cause of debate throughout the century. With the increase in population and the promise of jobs in urban centres, movement to the cities resulted in housing problems. The lower classes,{20} in particular the unskilled, the sick, and the old, became obstacles to the ever-increasing profits of the wealthy middle-class of merchants and factory owners. As the number of poor continued to increase it was clear that the eighteenth-century dependence on parish responsibility was no longer an adequate administrative set-up for dealing with the needs of the poor; and by the beginning of the nineteenth century poor-relief was viewed as burdensome to the rest of society. Therefore, the Industrial Revolution not only initiated social and economic change at the end of the eighteenth-century, but in the next century necessitated some kind of political change to deal with the emerging problems of society.

The combined effects of the Industrial Revolution, of Malthus-Smith-Ricardian economic theories, and of the Bentham-Coleridgian philosophical debate urged nineteenth-century social, economic, and political reforms. England's free trade policy early in the century, the London Merchants' Charter (1820), which borrowed from Adam Smith's theories,{21} and later the Anti-Corn-Law-League (1839) all depended on *laissez-faire* arguments and the teaching of the philosophical radicals. These developments, along with the Poor Law Amendment Act (1834) and the resistance by government to accepting responsibility for the poor, exemplify the effects utilitarian thought had on the nineteenth century. On the other hand, Robert Owen's (1771-1858) co-operative experiments and Shaftesbury's (Antony Ashley Cooper, 1801-55) work for the improvement of mental health, for factory reform, and for reforms in living conditions and education best represent the application of Coleridgian philosophy to politics. However, Bentham's secretary, Edwin Chadwick (1800-90), also contributed to public health reforms, and his work on various royal commissions drafting new legislation in this and other areas is proof that the utilitarians, while generally advocating *laissez-faire*, conceded that there are matters in which the state must intervene.

Political change was propelled by the discontent and increasing strength, first, of the middle classes and, later, the working classes. In his study of the nineteenth-century British economy, W. W. Rostow described this interdependence of social and economic developments with political change as "the link between the increase in relative economic importance of the industrial and commercial middle classes and the Reform Bill of 1832, [and] the link between the rise of the industrial working classes and the Reform Bill of 1867."{22} David Thomson, in his account of the period, also described the connection between social and political change:

> Throughout the century between 1815 and 1914 there was constant interplay between the development of social-welfare legislation and the progress of parliamentary reform. Social betterment made further extension of the franchise possible and more probable, and extensions of the franchise led to fresh programmes of social improvement.{23}

Ruskin wrote his social criticism during this intense period of social reform, economic debate, and political change. He wrote in the context of industrialism, current economic theories, and philosophical conflicts.

Ruskin's social writing, however, belongs not to the initial period of response during the first half of the century, but to the mid-Victorian reaction; his first economic essays appeared in the early eighteen-fifties and most of the letters of **Fors Clavigera** were written in the seventies. Economically, England showed improvement in the fifties. Growing material prosperity and a high level of industrial production contrasted strongly with the trade depression and the harvests from 1839 into the mid-forties. During this time the general increase in social responsibilities assumed by the government remained minimal. In a brief survey of mid-century conditions, David Thomson explained that

> broadly, the substance of Liberalism in home policy was still *laissez-faire* in economic life, involving low taxation, the piecemeal improvement of social conditions without radical overhaul, and the encouragement of private charity and voluntary association as the best remedies for surviving evils.{24}

Responsibility for social improvement continued to fall on the shoulders of concerned individuals. Politically the party system had evolved by mid-century and members of parliament were beginning to feel pressure from voters. None of these voters, however, was from the working class until after the Reform Bill of 1867. Not surprisingly, Ruskin's advocacy of a more complete program of government responsibility, and his condemnation of competition as the driving force of the economy met with opposition. When profits were increasing and economic conditions improving, however slightly, the leaders of business and government in England were not interested in long term consequences.

The mood of optimism in economic and political circles settled into self-satisfaction and material complacency. This mood permeates the work of politicians such as Palmerston and writers such as Macaulay and Samuel Smiles (**Self Help**, 1859). In discussing **Self Help**, Thomson wrote that "this long series of smug lay sermons on the virtues of industry and honesty, connecting always the practise of such virtue with the reward of material prosperity, is the shoddiest side of the mentality of the time."{25} Such thinking grew directly out of the early nineteenth-century popularization of the seventeenth-century puritanical belief that poverty is the result of lack of industry and want of honesty.

Discordant amidst mid-century complacency were the voices of writers such as Charles Dickens, Matthew Arnold, and John Ruskin, which continued to prick the moral conscience over the condition of England. They attacked the social, moral, and aesthetic ills which were the consequences of mid-century materialistic, economic, and political liberalism. In **Culture and Anarchy** (1869), Matthew Arnold attacked the materialism and false sense of freedom propagated by mid-century Liberalism. "All of us," he wrote, "so far as we are Barbarians, Philistines, or Populace, imagine happiness to consist in doing what one's ordinary self likes." Arnold indicated his opposition to this "imagined happiness" in his explanation that "within each of these classes there are a certain number of *aliens*, if we may so call them,--persons who are mainly led, not by their class spirit, but by a general *humane* spirit . . . ."{26} Ruskin might well be called one of Arnold's "aliens." Though the economic and historical studies by W. W. Rostow and R. M. Hartwell question the efficacy of the literary reaction, J. L. Bradley stressed the significance of the Victorian intellectual in his "introduction" to **"Unto This Last" and "Traffic"**:

> People a century ago listened to Ruskin as they listened to other writers who were courageous enough to present unpopular convictions; and although many opposed what he said and even reviled him personally, those same hostile forces were constantly prodded into thought and into fresh considerations of their positions. If a man could so stimulate his readers--and Ruskin did so increasingly as the century lumbered on--it is clear that he has bequeathed a valuable legacy to the human condition.{27}

Social conditions continued to improve during the late nineteenth century as pressure for improvement continued--pressure not only from writers, but also from growing numbers of men and women who organized in order to make their demands felt. The success of the Labour Representation Committee (L. R. C.) in 1906 and the win for twenty-nine labour members in the same year developed out of these early attempts at organization. The process which led to the Labour win of 1906 was the outcome of a long and gradual development which gained impetus from trade union movements and from the extension of the suffrage to the working classes in 1867. However, John

Ruskin did not favour this kind of organization; his belief in the importance of co-operation between men and women went against the pressure tactics inherent in the union movements.

By the end of the century attitudes to government intervention and social responsibility moved away from late eighteenth-century *laissez-faire* arguments and from mid-century complacency. Thomson assessed these changes as a logical progression of the Benthamite ideal which stressed "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." "When changed conditions demanded that Bentham's ideal be sought by positive means, . . . by deliberate social organization and collectivist measures instead of by optimistic trust in an 'invisible hand,' the days of *laissez-faire* were numbered."{28} Crane Brinton, tracing the outcome of the Coleridgian-Benthamite conflict in a study of nineteenth-century English political thought, wrote that "in general it may be said that during the century, conservative and liberal thinkers alike were led to view society less and less as a mechanism, and more and more as an organism."{29} By the end of the century, poverty was regarded as a social problem; for example, Charles Booth (1840-1916) wrote his study, **Life and Labour of the People of London**, in the late eighteen-nineties in co-operation with parliamentary committees investigating remedies for unemployment.

Though, as Thomson put it, "the days of *laissez-faire* were numbered" as the century progressed, ideas about and definitions of "freedom" continued many of the same kinds of social, economic, and political rationalizations linked with the *laissez-faire* stand. Various freedoms were illogically linked: freedom of thought, of speech, and of religion were extended to include freedom of enterprise, free trade, free markets (supply and demand), and free (unfettered) competition. For a long time state intervention and regulation were opposed as attacks on "freedom." Writers such as Arnold and Ruskin questioned and attacked these varied freedoms. Ruskin, for example, described the "freedom" of the liberal thinker as anarchy masquerading among the masses. In **The Stones of Venice** he explained that government would not be able to provide for the social needs of the people (education, health, employment) until it had "an authority over them." In outlining the conditions and philosophy of the St. George's Guild experiment, Ruskin declared:

> We will try to take some small piece of English ground, beautiful, peaceful, and fruitful . . . . We will have no liberty upon it; but instant obedience to known law, and appointed persons: no equality upon it; but recognition of every betterness that we can find, ... (**Fors**, letter 5; XXVII, 96)

The Fabians borrowed heavily from Ruskin's ideas: in Tract No. 70 (1896), they wrote: "man must be changed from a free being at liberty to seek his own profit into a member of a planned society that obliges all to act unselfishly."{30} G. Kitson Clark underlined definitions of freedom as the foremost sign of change throughout the Victorian Period. Sounding much like Ruskin, Clark explained this shift in nineteenth-century perceptions of "freedom" which marked the central difference between *laissez-faire* and interventionist principles:

> If standards were to be maintained and improved, if the demands of humanity were to be attended to, it was not going to suffice to rely on the fortuitous development of increasing prosperity, or, for that matter, on voluntary service however devoted, or on private benevolence however munificent. Englishmen of the nineteenth century would have to learn this lesson which many of them were so extremely reluctant to learn. To master the forces which their society had engendered, to do something for the myriads who thronged their streets, to respond at all effectively to the demands of justice and humanity, they had to use increasingly the coercive power of the State and the resources could only be made available by taxation; only so could conditions in factories be regulated and the more helpless types of labour be protected, only so could the towns of England be sewered, scavenged, partially rebuilt . . . only so could schools be provided for all and all children made to attend school.
>
> It was hard for Englishmen who believed that they had learnt from their history the importance of freedom and the dangers of the power of the State to accept the teaching of these necessities.{31}

Ruskin understood these necessities and said all of this in his major works of the fifties, sixties, and seventies.

Ruskin's view of social responsibility, economics, and politics grew out of the movements described here. Ruskin, who saw politics and economics as areas of moral investigation, sensed that social responsibility must overcome *laissez-faire* and capitalist philosophy.

Malthusianism, utilitarianism, and *laissez-faire* constituted a political position Ruskin abhorred. He saw in the fatalism of these three movements the cause of inactivity, passivity, and lack of responsibility by the government. He warned advocates of Malthus' equations and of principles of *laissez-faire*, that

> to call the confused wreck of social order and life, brought about by malicious confusion and competition, an arrangement of Providence, is quite one of the most insolent and wicked ways in which it is possible to take the name of God in vain. (**Time and Tide**; XVII, 320)

He was voicing a revulsion felt by many. His humanitarian impulses and his Christian morality set Ruskin against the orthodox social and economic positions.

Ruskin, then, asserted that politics must be moral, and he condemned politics based mainly on practical utilitarianism. This moral view of politics is "a distinct element in late nineteenth-century British socialism."{32} At the same time it represents a continuation of the efforts by men like Robert Owen and Lord Shaftesbury, who believed that reform is a matter of conscience and morals, and that poverty and distress are connected not to laziness or personal fault but to the faults of a social system. Ruskin resembled Owen in his paternalistic vision of an ideal society based on co-operation rather than competition. But unlike Owen's realization of a co-operative and paternal community in New Lanark in 1880 with its improved working conditions, improved wages, shortened work hours, and compulsory daytime education for children, Ruskin's vision for St. George's Guild remained only an idea. Shaftesbury and Ruskin were at one in their belief in social responsibility; both saw a direct connection between poverty and social problems such as crime. Both realized the need for education, welfare, and regulation of health and working conditions. Both men stood at the centre of one of the main concerns of the nineteenth century, the question of "what to do with the poor," and both encouraged the change in attitudes toward the poor. Like Ruskin, Shaftesbury realized that "whether a man became an angel or a beast largely depended on the accidents of birth and environment."{33} They attempted, therefore, to improve the environment and to ensure the well-being of all men regardless of birth.

In his analysis of the social, economic, and political system, Ruskin went beyond the work of philanthropists such as Owen and Shaftesbury and the literary response of writers such as Carlyle, Arnold, and Dickens. His social criticism as expressed in **A Joy For Ever, Unto This Last, Munera Pulveris, Time and Tide**, and **Fors Clavigera** addressed the issues and theories of political-economic thought, and argued against the inevitable splintering of its various concerns into separate sciences. In the nineteenth century the study of political economy involved the three areas of study now commonly called political science, economics, and sociology. Broken down further, political economics included both theoretical and applied study and ethical and moral branches as well as statistical computations as the nineteenth century progressed. The scope of political economy as it evolved from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth century is concisely explained in **Palgrave's Dictionary of Political Economy.**{34} Originally the term referred to the combined study of economy and of government--the word "politic" meaning the science and art of government; the word "polity," the form of government. Important changes took place in the meaning of the term with the appearance of Adam Smith's **Wealth of Nations** in which he replaced the view of a government which provided and ensured subsistence with a "hands off view of government;" Smith promoted a view of political economy as the study of wealth separate from the study of other social phenomena. Ricardo, in his **Principles of Political Economy and Taxation**, implied that taxation was the only legitimate function of government in the workings of a country's economy. As the nineteenth century progressed the division of political economy into the study of economic questions, of political functions and forms, and of the social philosophy evolving from the moral and ethical concerns of economic decisions, was encouraged by the writings of Nassau William Senior, John Stuart Mill, Walter Bagehot, and J. E. Cairnes. Taking the specialization of economics one step further, W. S. Jevons, in his **Theory of Political Economy** (1871), asserted that economics must be a mathematical science (thus pointing the way to the twentieth-century emphasis on statistics).

During the last thirty years of the nineteenth century the controversy about the aims of an economic study fluctuated between arguments for Individualism--self-interested, non-interference philosophy--and Socialism--philosophy of co-operative distribution. Ruskin anticipated the socialist position in his consideration of economics' ethical implications and his attempt to define just forms of production and distribution; competition and "fair exchange" are an improbable pair according to Ruskin. In his wider view of the consequences of political-economic decisions, Ruskin assessed the relationships between economic method and the determination of wages and prices. By the end of the nineteenth-century the term political economy was more closely associated with "the general science of society" and "the general art of government" than with the by then separate science of economics; all three studies at that time, however, were "in a rudimentary condition . . . struggling towards a fuller development."{35} Ruskin's writings, most notably **Unto This Last** and **Munera Pulveris**, were part of the struggle which insisted that economic principles not be separated from their social and political consequences.

Ruskin, who always attacked the concepts of political economy that supported capitalism and ignored the social needs of the masses, argued for the redistribution of wealth and the establishment of an authoritarian government to enforce social responsibility. He held a place in what R. M. Hartwell called the "conflict of political positions" of the mid-century, existing between "progressives--and by this time both Liberal and Conservative viewed the nineteenth century as one of massive and continuous progress--and distributionists, especially the Fabians, who condemned the organization and ethos of capitalism and who wished to change it."{36} Ruskin, who attacked capitalism and *laissez-faire* as systems in which the many exploit the few, belonged to the distributionists' side of the argument.

George Lichtheim, in **The Origins of Socialism** (1969), included Ruskin among the "socialist critics of capitalism [who] defined themselves not simply by deploring the condition of the labouring poor, but by rejecting the claims of economic liberalism." In Lichtheim's opinion, the early socialist movement implied a criticism of the Benthamite faith in rational self-interest, defined itself as a critique of liberalism, and attacked the "moral legitimacy attaching to a social order which had proclaimed individual self-interest as its only guiding rule."{37} Ruskin's doctrines parallel Lichtheim's explanation of the social movement in every sense, especially in terms of a necessary moral understanding of politics and economics.

Ruskin stressed again and again the need for industry to be based on principles of co-operation and service to the common good instead of on competition and self-interest. An oft-quoted precept, representative of Ruskin's social ideas, occurs both in the last volume of **Modern Painters**, and in the third essay of **Unto This Last**:

> Government and co-operation are in all things the Laws of Life; Anarchy and competition the Laws of Death.{38}

State intervention, social reform, and an ethical view of economics--all involving a redefinition of vlaue in terms of human needs--form major principles in Ruskin's vision of a peaceful, healthy, and happy society.

In the following chapters I analyse the works which form John Ruskin's social criticism. These contain his response to the emergence of industrialism, to the economic thought typified in the studies by Malthus, Smith, and Ricardo, to the Benthamite-Coleridgian tension, and to the social, economic, and political changes which took place during the nineteenth century. The "Preface" added to **Unto This Last** in 1862 adumbrates Ruskin's "political creed;" in it he insisted that government take responsibility for society's needy. For example, he wrote that

> Any man, or woman, or boy, or girl, out of

> employment, should be at once received at the nearest Government school, and set to such work as it appeared, on trial, they were fit for, at a fixed rate of wages determinable every year:--that, being found incapable of work through ignorance, they should be taught, or being found incapable of work through sickness, should be tended . . . .
>
> For the old and destitute, comfort and home should be provided; which provision, . . . would be honourable instead of disgraceful to the receiver. (XVII, 22)

His argument for responsibility, then, encompasses his answer to "the condition of England" question, his condemnation of the *laissez-faire* school of economics, his opposition to the utilitarian philosophy, and his encouragement of distributionist policy. Of his social and political-economic thought espoused in the letters of **Fors Clavigera**, which repeats the major ideas of **Unto This Last**, **Munera Pulveris**, and **Time and Tide**, he simply explained:

> there is nothing in it, nor ever will be in it, but common truths, as clear to honest mankind as their daily sunrise, as necessary as their daily bread. (**Fors** 43 (1874); XXVIII, 107)

Notes

1. John Stuart Mill, "Bentham," in **The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill**, Vol. 10 (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Pr., 1963-74), 75-76. This essay which extolls Bentham, first appeared in the **London and Westminister Review** (August, 1838). Two years later Mill published his essay on Coleridge in the same review (March, 1840).

2. George Watson, in **The English Ideology: Studies in the Language of Victorian Politics** (London: Allen Lane, 1973) presented an interesting thesis in his discussion of *laissez-faire* policy in nineteenth-century England. He devoted Chapter Five, "Laissez-faire and the State" (pp. 68-90), to a discussion of what he called the myth of the Victorian Period. He blamed Carlyle's essay of 1838 on Chartism for linking the name of Adam Smith with *laissez-faire* (Donothingism). Watson attempted to prove his argument by pointing out that none of the classical political economists ever used the term *laissez-faire* in their writings; I contend that the term does not have to be used when the *laissez-faire* arguments are obviously a part of their theories. Watson also tried to disclaim the criticisms of *laissez-faire* policies by nineteenth-century writers who, according to Watson, misinterpreted parts of the classical economists' texts. He disregarded Arnold Toynbee's lectures against the classical economists for reasons of misinterpretation and he dismissed Donothingism as "mere hostile rhetoric in a literature of protest" (p. 83). I suggest that the proof of the existence of *laissez-faire* policy rests in the lectures of men like Toynbee and in the literature of protest, itself.

3. Richard D. Altick, **Victorian People and Ideas: A Companion for the Modern Reader of Victorian Literature** (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1973), pp. 128-29.

4. Kenneth Smith, **The Malthusian Controversy** (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 70. The quotation is taken from William Hazlitt, "A Reply to the Essay on Population," Cobbett's **Weekly Register** (1807). Smith's study provides a thorough investigation into both the thought and the reactions to the thought of Thomas R. Malthus. It is divided into four books: in the first the origins of the Malthusian theory are examined; in the second the arguments against the theory are explicated; in book three the theory itself is examined; and in the last book the ways in which the theory affected the thought and social development of the early nineteenth-century are

investigated.

5. Elie Halevy, **England in 1815: A History of the English People in the Nineteenth-century**, Vol. I (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1949), 575.

6. Halevy, **England in 1815**, p. 576.

7. Basil Willey provided an excellent discussion of Bentham's **Deontology** in **Nineteenth-century Studies: Coleridge to Matthew Arnold** (New York: Columbia Univ. Pr., 1949), pp. 132-40.

8. Altick, **Victorian People and Ideas**, p. 117.

9. Willey, **Nineteenth-century Studies**, pp. 139-40.

10. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Constitution of Church and State," in **The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge**, Bollinger Series, Vol. 10 (Princeton: Univ. Pr., 1976; sponsored by London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969-n.d.). See especially Chapter III, "On the Church," (p. 35) for Coleridge's discussion of his "primary sense of wealth" and Chapter VII, "Regrets and Apprehensions," (pp. 61-70) for his opinions on utilitarianism.

11. Thomas Carlyle, "Sartor Resartus," in **The Works of Thomas Carlyle**, Centenary edition, Vol. 1 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1896-99), 136; 153-54. "Sartor Resartus" first appeared in **Fraser's Magazine**, 1833-34.

12. Phyllis Deane, **The First Industrial Revolution** (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr. 1965). Phyllis Deane pointed out, in the opening chapter of her study, that there is no consensus as to the exact date of the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. The current convention is to date the first industrial revolution from the seventeen-eighties. As she explained, "no one would deny that the period which began around the middle of the eighteenth century was a period in which important and far-reaching changes took place in the characteristic tempo of economic life in Britain" (pp. 3-4).

13. Carlyle, "Past and Present," **The Works**, Centenary edition, Vol. 10, p. 1.

14. R. M. Hartwell, "Interpretations of the Industrial Revolution in England: A Methodological Inquiry," **Journal of Economic History**, 19 (1959), 236-37.

15. The writings of John and Barbara Hammond and Sidney and Beatrice Webb are representative of the Fabian position which supported distributionist policies. In all

of their writing they strongly condemned conditions caused by industrialism and by capitalist economic beliefs. See the following works by the Hammonds: **The Age of the Chartists, 1832-1854: a Study in Discontent** (London: Fabian Society, 1930), a heavily biased Fabian classic; and **The Rise of Modern Industry,** 5th ed. (London: Fabian Society, 1937), which strongly supports Fabian ideals.

16. Thomas Babington Macaulay, **The History of England,** 4 vols. (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1849-61).

17. See Hartwell, p. 248; Phyllis Deane, Chapter Fifteen, "Standards of Living," pp. 237-53; W. W. Rostow, **British Economy of the Nineteenth Century** (Oxford: Clarendon Pr., 1948); and E. A. G. Robinson, "Changing Structure of the British Economy," **Economic Journal** (1954), CHART II: Changing Economic Structure of Great Britain.

18. C. J. Wrigley, ed., **The Working Classes in the Victorian Age,** Victorian Social Conscience Series, Vol. IV (1973), 269. From this series see also "The Children's Employment Committee," **The Quarterly Review,** 119 (1866), 364-93 and "Fatal Accidents in Mines," **The Edinburgh Review,** 125 (1867), 549-77, both from **Working Conditions in the Victorian Age,** ed. John Saville.

19. I paraphrase from the list given by Phyllis Deane in Chapter One, "The Starting-Point," (p. 1). I have not included the second point that she gives, which reads "specialization of economic activity directed towards production for national and international markets rather than for family or parochial use." This point implies economic issues which go beyond the scope of my own study.

20. It must be pointed out that at this stage in the development of industrial England there were no clear class categories and that the word "class" was not used as I freely use it here. For further explanation see E. P. Thompson's **The Making of the English Working Class,** rpt. of London: Victor Gollancz, 1963 (London: Penguin, 1975), pp.9-12.

21. David Thomson, **England in the Nineteenth Century (1815-1914), The Pelican History of England,** Vol. 8 (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1950). In his study, Thomson clearly explained the nineteenth-century movements, bills, and conflicts mentioned in this brief overview. He quoted two of the most important principles listed in the "London Merchants' Charter," principles borrowed directly from Adam Smith:

> That freedom from restraint is calculated to give

> the utmost extension to foreign trade, and the best direction to the capital and industry of the country. That the maxim of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest which regulates every merchant in his individual dealings, is strictly applicable as the best rule for the trade of the whole nation. (p. 77)

The application of these principles resulted in what was called the free trade movement.

22. W. W. Rostow, **British Economy of the Nineteenth Century**, p. 130.

23. Thomson, **England in the Nineteenth Century**, pp. 133-34

24. Thomson, **England in the Nineteenth Century**, p. 125

25. Thomson, **England in the Nineteenth Century**, p. 101.

26. Matthew Arnold, "Culture and Anarchy, An Essay in Political and Social Criticism," in **The Works of Matthew Arnold in Fifteen Volumes**, Vol. 6 (1903-04 rpt.; New York: AMS Press., 1970), 92; 94.

27. J. L. Bradley, ed., "Introduction," to **"Unto This Last" and "Traffic"** (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. xvi-xvii.

28. Thomson, **England in the Nineteenth Century**, pp. 201-02.

29. Crane Brinton, "Victorian Political Thought: Conclusions," in **Backgrounds to Victorian Literature**, ed. Richard A. Levine (San Francisco: Chandler Pub. Co., 1967), p. 270.

30. George Bernard Shaw, **Report on Fabian Policy and Resolutions**, Tract No. 70, presented to the International Socialist Workers and Trade Union Congress (London: Fabian Society, 1896), p. 3.

31. G. Kitson Clark, **The Making of Victorian England** (London: Methuen and Co., 1962), p. 280.

32. J. B. Conacher, **Waterloo to the Common Market**, The Borzoi History of England edition, Vol. 5: 1815 to the present (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), 49.

33. G. F. A. Best, **Shaftesbury** (London: Batsford, 1964), p. 115. Shaftesbury used parliamentary procedures

to change laws and regulations in his work to institute factory and health reforms. Some of the results of his life-long attempt at implementing reforms were: The Factory Act (1833); the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Children's Employment (1840); the Industrial Labour Protection Bills for Women and Children (1864 and 1867); and his work with the Health Board and the Ragged Schools.

34. Henry Higgs, ed., **Palgrave's Dictionary of Political Economy**, Vol. III, rpt. of Economic Classics; rev. ed., 1925-26, 1st ed., 1894-99 (New York: Augustus M. Kell, 1963), 128-33.

35. **Palgrave's Dictionary of Political Economy**, p. 133. I discuss the separation of the study of economics from the other social sciences further in Chapter Four, "The Mature Voice: The Political Economics of **Unto This Last**, **Munera Pulveris**, and **Time and Tide**," pp. 152-54.

36. Hartwell, "Interpretations of the Industrial Revolution," p. 240.

37. George Lichtheim, **The Origins of Socialism** (New York: Frederich A. Praeger, 1969), pp. 7; 4.

38. John Ruskin, **Unto This Last**; XVII, 74-75; and **Modern Painters** V; VII, 207.

CHAPTER III

The Early Social Voice: The Art Trilogy and **A Joy For Ever**

Thematic impulses combining John Ruskin's transcendental beliefs, his social conscience, and his humanitarian concerns imbue all that he wrote on art and architecture. The works of Ruskin's "great art trilogy"{1}--**Modern Painters** (1843-60); **The Seven Lamps of Architecture** (1849); and **The Stones of Venice** (1851-53)--spanning seventeen years of his writing career, record more than aesthetic opinion, interpretation, and theory. They contain the early evidences of his response to nineteenth-century philosophical debates and historical developments. In analogy and digression Ruskin posed arguments against *laissez-faire* positions, orthodox political-economic views, and principles of competition and self-interest. However, the social criticism that plays a largely secondary role in the writings on art, becomes the *raison d'etre* in **A Joy For Ever and Its Price in the Market Place** (published as **The Political Economy of Art** in 1857, three years before the completion of **Modern Painters**).{2}

Many years after **A Joy For Ever** had appeared, Ruskin commented on the meaning of the title, which he had borrowed from John Keats' "Endymion":

> The end . . . of my whole Professorship [of art at Oxford 1870-78; 1883-84] would be accomplished,--and far more than that,--if only the English nation could be made to understand that the beauty which is indeed to be a joy for ever, must be a joy for *all*.{3}

This insistence on the right of all men and women to happiness and beauty in their lives forms the unifying social motif throughout the writings on art and crystallizes in such chapters as "The Lamp of Life" from **The Seven Lamps of Architecture** and "The Nature of Gothic" from **The Stones of Venice**, Volume Two (1853). Even the earliest volumes of **Modern Painters** reflect a general concern for the betterment of humanity.

This discussion of Ruskin's early social voice is limited to the "art trilogy" and to **A Joy For Ever** which contains the two lectures delivered in 1857 at Manchester, the home of Malthus and Smith, the classical political economists. However, signs of Ruskin's social thought occur in all of his writing, including minor texts, diary entries, letters to newspapers, personal letters, and a series of public lectures given during the late eighteen-fifties. As early as 1845 political and social ideas, later to be develped in his social texts, appeared in letters to his father. For example, in a letter dated August 24, 1845 from Baveno, Ruskin wrote:

> It is not enough to make a government good, that its markets be well supplied--if it has turned its people into vegetables.{4}

In **Praeterita** (1885-89) Ruskin recorded his stay at Crossmount in the summer of 1847 as the time when his thoughts pointed to **Fors Clavigera** and **Munera Pulveris** (XXXV, 426). Those "thoughts" appear in all the works written during the fifties. In his pamphlet on "Pre-Raphaelitism" (1851), for example, he opened with a statement indicating his growing concern for the effects of work:

> It may be proved with much certainty that God intends no man to live in this world without working, but it seems to me no less evident that He intends every man to be happy in his work. (XII, 341)

This statement anticipates the social arguments of his political-economic treatises written in the sixties. More than this pamphlet on Pre-Raphaelitism, three early letters on Taxation, Elections, and Education indicate the directions of his early social thought. Though written in 1852 and meant for publication in the **Times**, they did not appear that year because of discouragement by Ruskin's father, John James Ruskin, who vehemently disagreed with his son's political ideas. After reading the three letters he cautioned his son in the strongest possible terms against printing them:

> I think all attacks on your books are only as the waves beating on Eddystone Lighthouse, whereas your politics are Slum Buildings liable to be knocked down; and no man to whom authority is a useful engine should expose himself to frequent

> defeat by slender forces. (Letter dated March 30, 1852; XII, lxxxiv)

Ruskin's letter on Taxation advocates free trade and graduated income tax (XII, 593); the one on Elections calls for universal suffrage with a graduated voting system based on age, education, and property (XII, 258). Ruskin expanded the third letter on Education into Appendix 7 of **Stones**, Volume Three, the closing paragraph of which strongly foreshadows **Unto This Last**: "The first duty of a state is to see that every child born therein shall be well housed, clothed, fed, and educated . . ." (XI, 263). Ruskin's social conscience, so evident in his writings, is also indicated by the time he spent participating in socially motivated activities such as his involvement with Rev. Frederick Denison Maurice at the Working Man's College in 1854, and in his time spent publicly expressing his social concerns in lectures, especially during the fifties.

In addition to the Manchester lectures published in **A Joy For Ever**, the most significant for revealing Ruskin's social thought couched in aesthetic criticism are five which examine various aspects of the arts in an industrial society. These were published as **The Two Paths: Being Lectures on Art and its Application to Decoration and Manufacture, Delivered in 1858-9** (XVI, 245-424). In his anthology, **The Genius of John Ruskin: Selections From His Writings**, John D. Rosenberg commented on the lectures of the fifties:

> During the 1850's Ruskin had become less concerned with the study of art than with the creation of social conditions under which the arts might flourish. "Beautiful art," he told his audiences, "can only be produced by people who have beautiful things about them, and leisure to look at them." But England had turned her cities into furnaces and her artisans into slaves of the machine. This is the theme of "Modern Manufacture and Design," [Lecture III from **The Two Paths**] and it runs throughout the lectures Ruskin gave in the industrial Midlands in the late 1850's. Published as **The Political Economy of Art** (1857) and **The Two Paths** (1859), the lectures are an expansion of "The Nature of Gothic" and a prelude to **Unto This Last**.{5}

Though Rosenberg underestimated Ruskin's humanitarian impulses thus mis-interpreting the production of "beautiful art" as Ruskin's reason for improving social conditions, he rightly recognized the social importance of the lectures of the fifties.{6}

From the time **The Stones of Venice** was completed in 1853 to the end of the decade, Ruskin's theorizing on the meaning of the arts, and on the place and the effects of the arts in society became the preliminary for his early analysis of that society in **A Joy For Ever**. Though he began **Modern Painters** in the optimistically romantic belief that accurate depiction of nature, embodying the order and the beauty of the deity, has redemptive powers for mankind,{7} by the end of **Stones** he had reached the point where he believed that before man can produce morally uplifting art or architecture, his society must allow him a happy and healthy life (proper medical care, housing, good education, safe working conditions, and so on). Seeing social change as the prerequisite to moral growth, he turned away from the view of nature and art as a moral panacea.{8} This position, expanded in "The Mountain Gloom" and "The Mountain Glory," the last two chapters of **Modern Painters** IV, is the basis of **A Joy For Ever** and subsequent social works.

Chronologically, the five volumes of **Modern Painters** bridge the entire period marking Ruskin's early social voice. The first volume (1843) of this critical study of art preceded the architectural studies while the final volume (1860) followed **A Joy For Ever** and the other lectures of the fifties. Understandably during the seventeen years that it took Ruskin to finish **Modern Painters** its form and purposes changed in much the same way as the form and purpose of Ruskin's writing career changed--started as a defence of the artist J. M. W. Turner (1771-1851), comparing Turner's accurate depictions of the natural world to Nature herself, it ended as a criticism of society based on what Ruskin came to call "Natural Law." Anticipating rebukes for the changes in focus and idea, he prefaced the last volume with a justification for them:

> These oscillations of temper, and progressions of discovery, extending over a period of seventeen years, ought not to diminish the reader's confidence in the book. Let him be assured of this, that unless important changes are occurring in his opinions continually, all his life long, not one of these opinions can be on any

> questionable subject true. All true opinions are living; and show their life by being capable of nourishment; therefore of change. But their change is that of a tree. (VII, x)

On re-examining his social thought in **Fors Clavigera,** he again defended this position of growth and change (Letter 78 (1877); XXIX, 137-38). Though his opinions and interests changed, in all his writings Ruskin maintained a cohesive link with his earliest ideas on the importance of the artist's ability to see the world around him and of the artist's role to show others what he sees. When Ruskin started **Modern Painters** he believed that in the forms of nature God reveals His glory; that God created Nature for the edification of man. Moral lessons, explained Ruskin, can be drawn from nature if man will only observe her closely and interpret what he sees. It follows that the importance of the artist depends on his ability to observe, understand, and record for all men the lessons discovered in the natural world.{9}

Throughout his social criticism, as in his writings on art, he emphasized the importance of seeing clearly:

> the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell what it *saw* in a plain way . . . . To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion,--all in one. (V, 333)

In a discussion of "Public Favour" in the fourth note of the "Addenda" to **A Joy For Ever**, he realized the urgency of letting others know what he saw, regardless of the opposition he knew his social ideas would invite:

> Your great man always at last comes to see

> something the public don't *(sic)* see. This something he will assuredly persist in asserting, whether with tongue or pencil, to be as *he* sees it, not as *they* see it; and all the world in a heap on the other side, will not get him to say otherwise. Then, if the world objects to the saying, he may happen to get stoned or burnt for it, but that does not in the least matter to him; if the world has no particular objection to the saying, he may get leave to mutter it to himself till he dies, and be merely taken for an idiot; that also does not matter to him--mutter it he will, according to what he perceives to be fact . . . . (XVI, 122-23)

By seeing clearly, Ruskin wrote poetry in his prose, forecast the inevitable social and political problems of a materialistic-capitalistic system, and recognized the necessity of applying the Christian ethic to secure social improvement.

Ruskin believed that of all artists Turner best displayed the ability "to see clearly." And in the first volume of **Modern Painters** he undertook a scientific study of Turner's accuracy in depicting the natural world, or as he continually called it, Turner's "truth to nature," in all its aspects. "Truth," the key word throughout this first volume, forms the key idea behind all of Ruskin's social criticism. The emphasis on truth comprised of observation, understanding, and accuracy, indicates the major principle on which he judged all art and, later, social policy. Truth, applied to art, is defined as "the faithful statement, either to the mind or senses, of any fact of nature" (III, 126). In the second part of Volume One, some four hundred pages of text entitled simply "Of

Truth," Ruskin was quite explicit about what he meant by truth to nature, about what truths are most important, and about his references to Turner's truth to nature.{10}

In Volume Two (1846) Ruskin moved to theoretical speculation, and attempted to define the characteristics of the artist as nature's interpreter, characteristics which, for the most part, describe his own role as social critic. He moved from actual defense of Turner to an explanation of his own theories of imagination which further connect his aesthetic and social thought. Ruskin defined three types of imagination: associative, penetrative, and contemplative. Through the associative imagination the artist combines various parts of nature into a perfect whole. Later in **Stones of Venice** and **A Joy For Ever** Ruskin saw this synthesizing ability as a necessity for any good political leader or manager of industry. A work produced with the aid of the associative imagination exhibits intense simplicity, perfect harmony, and absolute truth to nature. The penetrative imagination deals with the artist's "modes of apprehension" (IV, 249). The virtue of the penetrative imagination is "its reaching, by intuition and intensity of gaze (not by reasoning but by its authoritative opening and revealing power) a more essential truth than is seen at the surface of things" (IV, 284-85). Nineteenth-century economic and political thinkers, Ruskin pointed out, saw barely the surface of things and never the immediate or long range repercussions of their policies and ideas. The contemplative imagination is more technical. According to Ruskin, symbols and exaggerations are sometimes necessary to convey the inherent truth of a landscape, but this exaggeration must always be made in accordance with scientific principles. (The most common type of exaggeration occurs in the depiction of waves and mountains). This third category, though fundamental to the artist, is least applicable to Ruskin's social thought. Each kind of imagination must be based on the truths of nature, having "no dealings nor relations with any kind of falsity" (IV, 313). Robert Kimbrough, in his article "Calm Between Crises: Pattern and Direction in Ruskin's Mature Thought," attempted to explain the relationship between Ruskin's view of "a great artist" and his theories on the imagination:

> What ties the two areas of inquiry [art and the imagination] together is the fact that the imagination is the "highest faculty of the human mind" which sees "the eternal difference between good and evil . . ." [IV, 52-53]. Thus the artistic imagination contains highly refined Aristotelian reason which sees *truth* through order, and [has] a sharply defined instinct for *beauty*.{11}

Before leaving **Modern Painters** II, it should be mentioned that Ruskin devoted a good part of this volume to his theories on beauty. Their relationship to his social directions, however, are incidental. Henry Ladd, in **The Victorian Morality of Art: An Analysis of Ruskin's Aesthetic**, examined the passages from the sections on

Purity and Vital Beauty which foreshadow Ruskin's later social ideas.{12}

Speculations on the qualities of the artist and the workings of the imagination are continued in Volumes Three and Four, both written in 1856. Of the four qualities--invention, sincerity, love of beauty, and choice of a noble subject--which reflect the nature of the artist, the most important is "invention." Invention, or the poetic power of the artist, requires accuracy of memory and imagination to produce the feeling or atmosphere of a scene. These two volumes fully explain Ruskin's ideas of invention as well as the related theories on memory and involuntary recall, theories which anticipated and influenced advancing literary ideas of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The stream of consciousness as used in novels by James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Marcel Proust agreed with Ruskin's analysis of memory and involuntary recall. Marcel Proust, in **Remembrance of Things Past** (1910-22), consciously echoed many of Ruskin's ideas. Proust described Elstir's artistic technique in "Within a Budding Grove," Volume Two of **Remembrance**, in the words Ruskin used in **Modern Painters** to describe Turner (VI, 27-40):

> Since Elstir began to paint, we have grown familiar with what are called 'admirable' photographs of scenery and towns. If we press for a definition of what their admirers mean by the epithet, we shall find that it is generally applied to some unusual picture of a familiar object, a picture different from those that we

> are accustomed to see, unusual and yet true to nature, and for that reason doubly impressive to us because it startles us, makes us emerge from our habits and at the same time brings us back to ourselves by recalling to us an earlier impression.(13)

Turner's power of invention, his ability to observe unhampered by habit, and his truth to natural representation encouraged Ruskin's defense of his art and his panegyric of the artist:

> it may be generally stated that Turner is the only painter, so far as I know, who has ever drawn the sky . . . . He is the only painter who has ever drawn a mountain or a stone . . . . He is the only painter who has represented the surface of calm, or the force of agitated water; who has represented the effects of space on distant objects, or who has rendered the abstract beauty of natural colour. These assertions I make deliberately . . . . (III, 249-50)

Ruskin contrasted Turner's inventive powers with what he called the "pathetic fallacy" of the romantic artist who experiences an emotional or spiritual communion with nature, but is unable to express exactly what he sees. Instead, the romantic recreates nature through his own emotions. "The temperaments which admit the pathetic fallacy," wrote Ruskin, "are too weak to deal fully with what is before them" (V, 208). Ruskin again stressed the importance of seeing nature as she is; he believed that nature reflects God's laws and that man's moral nature depends upon his perception and interpretation of nature around him. Turner, unlike those afflicted by the pathetic fallacy, saw nature clearly and presented to others what he had seen without alteration (apart from the legitimate inventive process of the imagination).{14} Recall that for Ruskin, "the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to *see* something, and tell what it *saw* in a plain way . . . " (V, 333). Just as Ruskin saw Turner as a painter true to nature and able to portray nature accurately, so he saw himself as a thinker able to observe the natural and social world around him, and to articulate accurately what he discovered. Though Volumes Three and Four develop Ruskin's interests in the artist's imagination and powers of mind and in his role as teacher, the closing chapters of Volume Four, "The Mountain Gloom" and "The Mountain Glory," indicate that the new emphasis is on social problems, an emphasis maintained in the final volume written four years later. By 1856 the mountain, cloud, and journey imagery which, in the first volumes of **Modern Painters**, symbolize Ruskin's idealism and enthusiasm for the study of the natural world, suggest a pervasive "gloom" behind Ruskin's writings--indicating his growing criticism of society.{15}

From the beginning of **Modern Painters** Ruskin had declared the Wordsworthian belief that God reveals Himself and His teachings in Nature. He saw in nature a beauty and an order that he hoped for in society. The root of all of Ruskin's social ideas can be found in these early romantic views which, though transcendental, are based on scientific principle. The study of natural sciences--geology, botany, meteorology--together with the study of detailed drawing, and the first-hand observation of nature, form the background for his art criticism. In describing Ruskin, his father wrote, "from boyhood my son has been an artist, but he has been a geologist from infancy."{16}

In the early social criticism he derived analogies from his scientific knowledge; he described social principles in the images of nature. But his references to nature are not meant to be only metaphoric. In **Modern Painters**, the Wordsworthian view of Nature develops into Ruskin's concept of "Natural Law," which emerges as the "Law of Providence" in **A Joy For Ever**. He referred to the Laws of Providence (laws discovered by a close examination of the natural world) as the proper guides for political-economic decisions. Among Ruskin's Laws of Providence are the development of individuality and the co-operation of all the parts and members of any system.

His insistence on the importance of nurturing the individuality of every member of society and on the necessity for those members to co-operate, and his condemnations of competitive and exploitive industrialism are in accord with his interpretations of "Natural Law." For example, in his description of clouds early in Volume One, he wrote:

> nature never lets one of the members of even her most disciplined groups of cloud be like another; but though each is adapted for the same function, and in its great features resembles all the others, not one, out of the millions with which

> the sky is chequered, is without a separate beauty and character. (III, 362)

His insistence that the individuality of every member of society be encouraged, emphasized throughout his social writing, is founded on the belief that each man and woman is unique, having his or her own worth and beauty, abilities, and character. In this "Natural Law," so-called because Nature herself supports the principle, are the origins of Ruskin's views on education, working conditions, economics, and politics.

In Volume Two Ruskin asserted that "the pleasure afforded by every organic form is in proportion to its appearance of healthy vital energy" (IV, 151). To him nineteenth-century man lacked this "healthy vital energy." His descriptions of decay in nature apply aptly to the corruption and disintegration Ruskin later observed and condemned in society:

> In corruption and decay of all kinds, . . . particles which once, by their operation on each other, produced a living and energetic whole, are reduced to a condition of perfect passiveness, in which they are seized upon and appropriated, one by one, by whatever has need of them, without any power of resistance or energy of their own. (IV, 129)

This natural process is analogous to the exploitation and corruption in industrial England. His defence of co-operation as the basis of social and economic change is presented as a geological analogy in the fifth volume of **Modern Painters.** Ruskin explained that an ounce of slime, made of clay, soot, sand, and water, remained slime as long as those four substances competed for a place at ground level, but if they joined and rested over a long period of time, they hardened; thus "for the ounce of slime which we had by political economy of competition, we have by political economy of co-operation, a sapphire, an opal, and a diamond" (VII, 177). The ideas of individuality, vital energy, organic growth, and co-operation in these analogies to nature--argued for on the basis of "Natural Law"--represent the conditions Ruskin believed to be requisite for the implementation of his social policies. I might note at his point that Ruskin's attempt to objectify some form of absolute law was indicative of the Victorian search for something certain in an uncertain world. At the same time, this articulation of the "Laws of Providence" or of "Natural Law" as the guide for political-economic decisions was a handy strategy for a man adept at analogy trying to convince his public to repel the accepted notions of competition.

In the later critical works on art, expecially **The Elements of Drawing** (1859) and **Modern Painters** V (1860), Ruskin continued to elucidate the moral and social lessons in "Natural Laws." In **Elements** he explained the growth of a tree in terms of four laws which govern all vegetative processes; namely, the support from one living root, the radiation or force from one given point, the liberty of each bough to seek its own livelihood and happiness according to its needs, and the co-operation of each bough with the others to bring about the perfection of the great curve and stateliness of the whole tree. These laws are analogous to Ruskin's social laws:

> I think I may leave you, unhelped, to work out the moral analogies of these laws . . . . As you draw trees more and more in their various states of health and hardship, you will be every day more struck by the beauty of the types they present of the truths most essential for mankind to know; . . . . These trees and leaves, I say, are meant to teach us as we contemplate them, and read or hear their lovely language.{17}

Ideas of co-operation are strongly evident in the last two parts of **Modern Painters**, Volume Five. Part VIII, "Of Ideas of Relation: --First of Invention Formal" includes a chapter entitled "The Law of Help" which shows how the composition of a painting, like the development of a plant and the workings of a co-operative society, depends on the support of one part by another.

> The power which causes the several portions of the plant to help each other, we call life. Much more is this so in an animal . . . . The ceasing of this help is what we call corruption. (VII, 174)

Later alluding to this passage in his most famous social document, **Unto This Last**, Ruskin noted that all his principles of political economy are summed up in the last volume of **Modern Painters**:

> Government and Co-operation are in all things the Laws of Life; Anarchy and competition are Laws of Death. (XVII, 75)

This principle is restated in analogies to nature throughout this penultimate chapter of **Modern Painters V.**

The last part of Ruskin's five-volume study offers the author's pessimistic sense of his own society as captured in Turner's paintings. In Part IX, "Of Ideas of Relation: --Second, of Invention Spiritual," he interpreted paintings in terms of the social errors which presage ultimate social corruption. Writing of Turner's **The Goddess of Discord Choosing the Apple of Contention in the Garden of the Hesperides** (1806), he related the artist's representation of the Greek myth to its moral implications for nineteenth-century England: the dragon in the background represents the doom awaiting the English nation.{18} Long before Ruskin finished his treatise on painting, he had realized that the study of nature and art alone were not enough to subdue England's "dragon." Once Ruskin's interest in "Natural Laws" touched on the social issues of co-operation and human development (for example, the discussions of healthy vital energy in the second volume of **Modern Painters**), his move from painting to architecture was inevitable. For Ruskin, architecture, which encourages both a group and an individual effort from the artist, stands as public testimony to a society's general nature--its style of execution indicates an emphasis on either competitive or co-operative efforts; the latter, for Ruskin, is always superior. Ruskin's claim that "architecture must be the beginning of arts [sic], and that the others must follow her" (**Seven Lamps**; VIII, 255), implies his preference for social as opposed to private goals. Architecture, the social art, stresses the work of groups of men and women rather than the work of an individual.

There are, of course, other reasons to explain this shift from Ruskin's work on **Modern Painters** to his study of architecture. In Volume Two of **Modern painters** Ruskin left his examination of Turner and explored other qualities and aspects of art, showing an increasing interest in other artists as well. He studied the works of various Italian artists, praising Tintoretto, Fra Angelico, Titian, and Bellini. His interest in these Italian masters coincided with his continental tour of 1846 which took him to the major Italian cities. E. T. Cook, in his "Introduction" to **The Seven Lamps of Architecture** (VIII, xx), provided the itinerary of that tour which included the following cities: Turin (May 2); Vercelli (May 4); Arona (May 6); Bergano (May 7); Rome (May 8); Verona (May 10); Venice (May 14); Padua (May 28); Bologna (June 1); and Florence (June 7). Ruskin filled his diary of the tour with notes on the architectural styles of the areas in which he travelled. His notes present not only factual descriptions but his interpretations of the cathedrals and palaces he observed.{19}

From these interpretations, always based on structual form, he developed his equations between the moral and social condition of a society and the quality of the architecture which that society produced. The best architecture, he concluded, is produced by the happiest and healthiest workers. These relationships are developed in the five texts written between the appearance of the second and third volumes of **Modern Painters**, namely, **The Seven Lamps of Architecture** (1849); the three volumes of **The Stones of Venice**, "The Foundations" (1851), "The Sea Stories" (1853), and "The Fall" (1853); and the less known **Examples of the Architecture of Venice** (1851). Of the five texts, **Seven Lamps** and the second volume of **Stones of Venice** most clearly foreshadow **A Joy For Ever** and the subsequent social texts.

Together **Seven Lamps** and **Stones** are meant to provide the student of architecture with examples of the best architecture yet produced and a set of criteria by which to measure quality in building. In **Seven Lamps** Ruskin offered seven guides or illuminating principles which are "not only safeguards against every form of error, but sources of every measure of success in architecture" (VIII, 21-22). These "seven lamps" repeat the ideas of beauty, truth, and memory from **Modern Painters** Volumes One and Two, and embody Ruskin's ethical interpretations of art. Once Ruskin discerned his "seven lamps" in the Venetian architecture of the Gothic Period,{20} he next described that architecture in words **(The Stones of Venice)** and with illustrations **(Examples of the Architecture of Venice)**. In the "Preface" to the first edition of **The Stones of Venice** (Feb. 1851), Ruskin explained the relationship between **Stones** and **Examples:**

> It was of course inexpedient to reduce drawings of crowded details to the size of an octavo volume . . . [therefore] I determined to separate the text and the unreducible plates. I have given, with the principal text [of **Stones**], all the illustrations absolutely necessary to the understanding of it, and, in the detached work [**Examples of the Architecture of Venice**], such additional text as had special reference to the larger illustrations. (IX, 8-9)

However, his discussions are far more than examinations of architectural styles and methods. Ruskin, himself, in the lengthy opening chapter of the first volume of **Stones**, showed that he had a purpose beyond the study of architecture. He believed that the architecture of Venice, the very stones of the city, held a meaning crucial for nineteenth-century reform. Explicating the relationships between religion, government, and art which he observed in the buildings of Venice, Ruskin explained that "the decline of her political prosperity was exactly coincident with that of domestic and individual religion," a decline evident in the corruption of Venetian architectural styles during the Renaissance (IX, 23). His writing in **Stones** is informed by sincere urgency:

> I would endeavour to trace the lines of this image [of Venice] before it be for ever lost, and to record, as far as I may, the warning which seems to me to be uttered by every one of the fast-gaining waves, that beat like passing bells, against the STONES OF VENICE.
>
> It would be difficult to overrate the value of the lessons which might be derived from a faithful study of the history of this strange and mighty city. (IX, 17-18)

Ruskin combined his warnings about and his lessons from Venice with the principles of **Seven Lamps** and the explications of his "Natural Laws" to form the humanitarian pleas and social criticisms of **A Joy For Ever**.

Seven Lamps, more than anything in **Modern Painters**, projects an increasing awareness of the social evils in England. E. T. Cook believed that in **Seven Lamps** Ruskin presented "the first sound of waves of thought and feeling on social questions."{21} After commenting on the architectural premises of this study, Cook added that for "the student of Ruskin **The Seven Lamps of Architecture** is of further interest for the anticipation of social and political ideas which were afterwards to colour all his works" (VIII, xliv). In seven chapters corresponding to the seven lamps--Sacrifice; Truth; Power; Beauty; Life; Memory; and Obedience--he explained how their associated attitudes, feelings, and beliefs affect the quality of building; and in each chapter he suggested that those attitudes, feelings, and beliefs were missing in industrial England. Though the discussions of "Life" and "Obedience," Chapters Five and Seven, contain the closest links with Ruskin's mature social voice, all seven reveal his primary concern in this study: the human condition.

As in the early volumes of **Modern Painters**, in **Seven Lamps** Ruskin argued for a moral relationship between the art, the artist, and the viewer; the subject matter and technical execution of any art should have an edifying effect on artist and viewer. In his opening comment in **Seven Lamps**, later expanded in **Stones of Venice**, he asserted this relationship:

> Architecture is the art which so disposes and adorns the edifices raised by man, for whatsoever uses, that the sight of them may contribute to his mental health, power, and pleasure. (VIII, 27)

Already Ruskin's focus was on the relationship of the architecture to man rather than on the architecture itself. In the first two chapters, "Sacrifice" and "Truth," while he repeated the **Modern Painters'** concepts of art and the artist, Ruskin revealed something of his disdain for industrial England and its effects on man's social and spiritual condition. In "The Lamp of Sacrifice" he commended the exercise of self-denial for the sake of self-discipline in one's work and for the desire to honour or please someone else, or, as in the case of architecture, to benefit the public. The spirit (a word used synonomously with lamp throughout the text) of sacrifice, explained Ruskin, is just "the opposite of the feeling of modern times, which desires to produce the largest results at the least cost" (VIII, 31).

In the second chapter he echoed the premises of **Modern Painters** in his emphasis on "Truth" as a measure of value.{22} In architecture, Ruskin explained, there are three common deceits which must be avoided: structural deceits (the suggestion of a support other than the real one); surface deceits (the painting of surfaces to suggest some other material than the one actually used); and operative deceits (the use of a machine to make what appears to be hand made ornament). Everything in a building should be what it purports to be. The abstract quality of truth is the absolute standard against which Ruskin measured everything from the depiction of nature and the structure of a cathedral to the marketing practices of a manufacturer and the promises of a politician. This concept of truth (like that of sacrifice) is easily carried over to social issues as in **A Joy For Ever** and the later economic treatises. In "The Lamp of Truth" Ruskin established that the worst kind of deceit is not the "absolute and obvious deceit" but

> the glistening and softly spoken lie; the amiable fallacy; the patriotic lie of the historian, the provident lie of the politician. (VIII, 55)

In **A Joy For Ever**, Ruskin added the lie of commerce to this list in a diatribe against deception in the market place:

> I have sometimes thought a day might come, when the nation would perceive that a well-educated man who steals a hundred thousand pounds, involving the entire means of subsistence of a hundred families, deserves, on the whole, as severe a punishment as an ill-educated man who steals a purse from a pocket, or a mug from a pantry.
>
> But without hoping for this excess of clear-sightedness, we may at least labour for a system of greater honesty and kindness in the minor commerce of our daily life; since the great dishonesty of the great buyers and sellers, is nothing more than the natural growth and outcome from the little dishonesty of the little buyers

> and sellers. Every person who tries to buy an article for less than its proper value, or who tries to sell it at more than its proper value--every consumer who keeps a tradesman waiting for his money, and every tradesman who bribes a consumer to extravagance by credit, is helping forward, according to his own measure of power, a system of baseless and dishonourable commerce, and forcing his country down into poverty and shame. And people of moderate means and average powers of mind would do far more real good by merely carrying out stern principles of justice and honesty in common matters of trade, than by the most ingenious schemes of extended philanthropy, or vociferous declarations of theological doctrine. There are three weighty matters of the law--justice, mercy, and truth. (XVI, 138-39)

Ruskin was unwavering in his demand for truth:

> Do not let us lie at all. Do not think of one falsity as harmless, and another as slight, and another as unintended. (VIII, 56)

He would accept no rationalization for deceit.

The third and fourth lamps, Power and Beauty, are related as the spirits which infuse a building with a "mysterious majesty," with spiritual power or the capacity to awe. Ruskin explained that

> whatever is in architecture fair or beautiful, is imitated from natural forms; and what is not derived, but depends for its dignity upon arrangement and government received from human mind, becomes the expression of the power of that mind. (VIII, 101)

Though not as directly related as some other "lamps" to later social criticism, both of these indicate Ruskin's early social voice. The discussion of beauty not only reinforces the significance to Ruskin of the natural world, but foreshadows the allusion in the title, **A Joy For Ever:** beauty must be permitted to all men and women, and therefore, must be part of that most public art, society's edifices.{23}

In the chapter on Power Ruskin focused on the condition of man's mind, a theme he developed further in the chapter on the "Lamp of Life". His equation between man's social condition and the condition of his mind, an equation at the root of his social philosophy, is intimated in the conclusion to "The Lamp of Power":

> Of domestic architecture what need is there to speak? How small, how cramped, how poor, how miserable in its petty neatness is our best! How beneath the mark of attack, and the level of contempt, that which is common with us! What a strange sense of formalized deformity, of shrivelled precision, of starved accuracy . . . . there is that in their miserable walls which bricks up to death men's imaginations. (VIII, 136)

In addition to establishing a relationship between man's living conditions and the state of his mind, in this comment Ruskin initiated a life-long plea for improved housing.

More than any other chapter in **Seven Lamps**, "The Lamp of Life" marks in these aesthetic writings the developing social voice of Ruskin, incorporating the ideas of vital energy and organic life suggested first in **Modern Painters** II. In this chapter Ruskin extended his premises about architecture to a theory about human about human error, called "Imperfection" in **Stones of Venice**,{24} to the "Natural Laws" of individuality expressed in the later volumes of **Modern Painters**, and, most significantly, to his social policies which require caring for one's fellow man and developing the potential of all members of society.

In this fifth chapter Ruskin equated the meaning of life with the life of the mind, a concept most difficult to define:

> in all other kind [sic] of energies except that of man's mind, there is no question as to what is life, and what is not . . . . His true life is like that of lower organic beings, the independent force by which he moulds and governs external things; it is a force of assimilation which converts everything around him into food, or into instruments; and which, however humbly or obediently it may listen to or follow the guidance of superior intelligence, never forfeits its own authority as a judging principle, as a will capable either of obeying or rebelling. His false life . . . is that life of custom and accident in which many of us pass much of our time in the world. (VIII, 191-92)

E. T. Cook included in a footnote a passage from the manuscript of **Seven Lamps** which defines life for man as "the life of servility and custom, the life wherein he ceases to have a will properly so called, because he ceases to have thought" (VIII, 191 n.). In these passages emerge the basis for the social teachings, further developed in this chapter and in **Stones of Venice**. Ruskin was shaping his view that individuality and free will are superior to unthinking servility. His ideas serve not only as grounds for criticism of the factory system in England but also as the arguments for education in **A Joy For Ever**:

> The aim of the teaching you give [a student]

> ought to be, to prove to him and strengthen in him his own separate gift.

And of examinations he added that the aim must not be competition but

> to make the students rather look upon [the examination] as a means of ascertaining their own true positions and powers in the world, than as an arena in which to carry away a present victory. I have not, perhaps, in the course of the lecture, [Ruskin added] insisted enough on the nature of relative capacity and individual character . . . . ("Trial Schools"; XVI, 120-21)

In these passages on education Ruskin also touched on some of his least popular ideas. He refuted the idea that all men are equal by explaining that we are all born with individual talents ("the nature of relative capacity and individual character") and that we must learn to recognize and accept other individuals who have talents and abilities greater than and less than our own. He entered into more controversial areas of speculation when he suggested to the working men of England that they attempt to recognize and accept (obey) their true leaders. In the passage taken from **A Joy For Ever** he advised against putting a student

> into swollen rivalry with those who are everlastingly greater than he: still less ought you to hang favours and ribands about the neck of the creature who is the greatest, to make the rest envy him. Try to make them love him and follow him, not struggle with him. (XVI, 121)

The emphasis in "The Lamp of Life" on individuality and the development of the human mind anticipates Ruskin's later criticisms of and advice for nineteenth-century educational policy.

As well as indicating the beginnings of his ideas on education, in this chapter Ruskin asserted that beauty depends on the happiness of the worker. The relationship between happiness and beauty, expanded in **Stones of Venice**, influences all of his later ideas connected with social affection. The two aphorisms which develop from this position are, first, that man must be happy before he can do good work of any kind, and, second, that man's unhappiness is inevitable in a society with corrupt political and economic systems. Therefore, the production of good work and the creation of beauty are not possible until those systems are reformed. In a discussion of ornamentation in buildings for signs of living architecture Ruskin revealed this central relationship between happiness and good work:

> I believe the right question to ask, respecting all ornament, is simply this: Was it done with enjoyment--was the carver happy while he was about it? It may be the hardest work possible, and the harder because so much pleasure was taken in it; but it must have been happy too, or it will not be living. (VIII, 218)

Ruskin's "Theory of Imperfection," as later defined in **Stones of Venice**, is a product of the equation between good work and a happy worker. If the condition of life, and in turn of happiness, is to be independent, then a sign of life in man's work will be his weaknesses as well as his strengths; he must be able to express all facets of his individuality:

> there will be found in the living architecture marks, not to be mistaken, of intense impatience; a struggle towards something unattained, which causes all minor points of handling to be neglected; and a restless disdain of all qualities which appear either to confuse contentment, or to require a time and care which might be better spent . . . . The vigour of a true school of early architecture, which is either working under the influence of high example or which is itself in a state of rapid development, is very traceable, among other signs, in the contempt of exact symmetry and measurement, which in dead architecture are the most painful necessities. (VIII, 199)

Ruskin was talking about "that form of vitality which is known almost as much by its errors as by its atonements for them" (VIII, 213). The best architecture is produced, therefore, when men are allowed errors in their attempt to put something of themselves into their work. In Chapter Six, "The Lamp of Memory," Ruskin again touched on this form of vitality. But this time he used Gothic as the best example of life in ornamentation. As he explained,

> it is, however, generally unwise, even in mere surface ornament, to surrender the power and privilege of variety which the spirit of Gothic architecture admits . . . . Better the rudest word that tells a story or records a fact, than the richest without meaning. (VIII, 230)

Stones of Venice continues the discussion started here.

His concluding comment in Chapter Five that "money will not buy life" is often repeated in his social writings, and indirectly in his definitions of wealth in **Unto This Last**. Money, no matter how much, cannot purchase the mind or soul of another. Ruskin, in such statements, was surely looking at the effects of industrialism on men and women. He ended this chapter mixing his warnings that we must not turn "the few glowing moments of [life] into mechanism" (VIII, 219) with equally effective images for nineteenth-century industrialism: since life is so brief, "let it at least appear as a cloud in the height of Heaven, not as the thick darkness that broods over the blast of the Furnace, and rolling of the Wheel" (VIII, 220). Having identified the need in man's life and work for independence and emotion rather than servility and mechanization, Ruskin moved logically in his social texts of the next decade towards suggesting ways to ensure happiness in life.

In Chapter Six, "The Lamp of Memory," Ruskin introduced another relationship between art and society. Near the close of it he affirmed that art reflects the society or the man that created it. He had tried

> to show in the preceding pages how every form of noble architecture is in some sort the embodiment of the Polity, Life, History, and Religious Faith of Nations. (VIII, 248)

Repeated in various forms throughout the rest of his writings, this reflection appears in **Stones of Venice** as the statement that the "temper of a people can be seen in their architecture as in a mirror" ("Preface" to **Stones** (1874); IX, 14).

Also in this sixth chapter, Ruskin stressed that architecture must be historical and permanent, thus arguing the necessity of responsibility towards future generations. The architecture of the day must tell future ages something of the past; and the architecture of the past must be preserved for its message. The plea for preservation for the maintenance of buildings and monuments, became a cry that persisted throughout his years of lecturing and writing. By restoration Ruskin did not mean rebuilding or changing monuments and structures of the past, but taking proper care of and adding necessary supports to them. "Watch an old building with anxious care; guard it as best you may, and at *any* cost, from every influence of dilapidation." Ruskin added, however, that we must accept the fact that all material eventually decays and that for each building a day will come when it can no longer be guarded from dilapidation. Of that day he said, "let it come declaredly and openly, and let no dishonouring and false substitute deprive it of the funeral offices of memory" (VIII, 244-45).

Ruskin looked beyond the problems of his own day to their possible repercussions on future generations. A fear that his society would not take responsibility for the future inculcates his prophetic conclusions:

> The idea of self-denial for the sake of posterity, of practising present economy for the sake of debtors yet unborn, of planting forests that our descendants may live under their shade, or of raising cities for future nations to inhabit, never, I suppose, efficiently takes place among publicly recognized motives of exertion. Yet these are not the less our duties; nor is our part fitly sustained upon the earth, unless the range of our intended and deliberate usefulness include, not only the companions but

> the successors of our pilgrimage. God has lent us the earth for our life; it is a great entail. It belongs as much to those who are to come after us . . . as to us; and we have no right, by anything that we do or neglect, to involve them in unnecessary penalties, or deprive them of benefits which it was in our power to bequeath. (VIII, 232-33)

Here is a reminder that Ruskin's visions, whether aesthetic or social, have a moral base in responsibility and co-operation. His later definitions of wealth, equality, and freedom all depend on his conviction that there is no such thing as freedom from responsibility, obligation, and self-discipline. Against the *laissez-faire* rationale he asserted that man must not think only of himself. In **A Joy For Ever** Ruskin extended this sense of responsibility to include not only future generations but the peoples of other nations as well. In criticizing the principle of self-interest, he wrote that "the personal efforts of Englishmen to redeem the condition of foreign nations, are among the most direct pieces of duty which our wealth renders incumbent upon us." There is nothing more ludicrous than "the notion that charity is a geographical virtue" (XVI, 71). A more direct criticism of the *laissez-faire* argument against taking responsibility for others, grows out of the ideas in "The Lamp of Memory," and is boldly stated early in **A Joy For Ever**:

> I wish to plead for your several and future consideration of this one truth, that the notion of Discipline and Interference lies at the very root of all human progress or power; that the

> "Let-alone" principle is, in all things which man has to do with, the principle of death; that it is ruin to him, certain and total, if he lets his land alone--if he lets his fellow-men alone--if he lets his own soul alone. That his whole life, on the contrary, must, if it is healthy life, be continually one of ploughing and pruning, rebuking and helping, governing and punishing . . . . (XVI, 26)

Chapter Seven, "The Lamp of Obedience", merits close attention because it contains the major premises of Ruskin's social policies. The chapter opens with a condemnation of the modern concept of liberty. By pursuing the meaning of liberty, Ruskin explained that he had learned "how false is the conception, how frantic the pursuit, of that treacherous phantom which men call Liberty . . . . There is no such thing in the universe." Citing "Natural Law" in support of his claim, he pontificated: "If there be any one principle more widely than another confessed by every utterance, or more sternly than another imprinted on every atom, of the visible creation, that principle is not Liberty, but Law" (VIII, 248-49). E. T. Cook, commenting on Ruskin's ideas about liberty, explained that

> Ruskin's political views were already, it will be seen, beginning to take their ultimate shape, and to wear a positive, as well as a negative, aspect. He was opposed to Liberty in the sense of absence of restraint, but he was beginning to see the necessity of Liberty in the positive sense of freedom to make the best of themselves, secured to the citizens of a state by wise government.{25}

In this last chapter of **Seven Lamps**, as in all of his social writings, Ruskin saw nineteenth-century liberty and *laissez-faire* policies as synonymous: and he loathed both concepts, blaming them for "the condition of England." He asked his readers,

> If by Liberty you mean chastisement of the passions, discipline of the intellect, subjection of the will; if you mean respect for all who are in dependence; veneration for the good, mercy to the evil, sympathy with the weak . . . . why do you name this by the same word by which the luxurious mean license, and the reckless mean change; by which the rogue means rapine, and the fool equality; by which the proud mean anarchy, and the malignant mean violence?{26}

In this long rhetorical question Ruskin summarized his own arguments for just laws, personal restraint, and co-operation, in opposition to *laissez-faire* attitudes and democratic doctrines. In this last chapter of **Seven Lamps**, as in his major social works, Ruskin called for the "concentration of individual, and co-operation of multitudinous, energy" which he believed would result in "national happiness and virtue." And he asked for "our willingness in all things to submit ourselves to every law that could advance the interest of the community" (VIII, 259). Even at this point Ruskin had not consciously left the study of art and architecture for that of society. But his examination of what produces good art and architecture had led him to many of the topics which influenced the direction of his work for the next twenty-five years.

In the final three sections of "The Lamp of Obedience" (sections 8 to 10), however, he left architecture behind. Of these closing pages, Cook wrote that "the leading ideas in Ruskin's political economy here begin."{27} Vehement criticisms of the nineteenth century mingle with clarified opinions on production, employment, and the meaning of true, as opposed to false, economy--all concerns outside the field of art. Ruskin's criticisms of society should be read in relation to his times: he wrote **Seven Lamps** in 1848, at a time of Chartism at home and revolution abroad (especially in France). Seeing the century as one of "doubt and ignorance" following "a wild course," he defined the "horror, distress, and tumult of Europe" as the result of

> the recklessness of villainy in the leaders of revolt, the absence of common moral principle in the upper classes, and of common courage and honesty in the heads of government.
> (VIII, 259-61)

Ruskin's goal in his social writings and lectures was to re-establish responsibility, morality, and honesty in the leaders and governors of men.

He claimed that as important as good leadership is to the happiness and health of any society so are the kinds of employment and the means of production. With this tenet he stepped away from the study of architecture. First, he stressed that the happiness of the worker depends on mental interest in work. Second, he emphasized the importance of adopting and promoting employment which might improve the worker. He cautioned against the production of useless articles, which employ men and women in futile activities. All these ideas appear first in section eight of "The Lamp of Obedience" and then again in **A Joy For Ever** and **Unto This Last**. Interesting work is not only a condition for the happiness of the worker, but also one of Ruskin's "economic laws": an interested and happy worker will always be more productive than one who is bored and unhappy. As he explained in **A Joy For Ever**:

> men condemned to a monotonous exertion, work . . . only at a tranquil rate, not producing by any means a maximum result in a given time. But if you allow them to vary their designs, and thus interest their heads and hearts in what they are doing, you will find them become eager, first, to get their ideas expressed, and then to finish the expression of them; and the moral energy thus brought to bear on the matter quickens, and therefore cheapens, the production in a most important degree. (XVI, 37-38)

Though he referred to artists in this passage, Ruskin extended this "plain rule of political economy" to all workers by the time he wrote his economic treatises in the eighteen-sixties.

Before concluding **Seven Lamps** Ruskin struck what Cook called "the keynote of his political economy."{28} The rhetorical power of Ruskin's argument, so pervasive in the later works, is felt in these lines:

> We are, perhaps, hardly enough in the habit of inquiring, with respect to any particular form of luxury or any customary appliance of life, whether the kind of employment it gives to the operative or the dependent be as healthy and fitting an employment as we might otherwise provide for him. It is not enough to find men absolute subsistence; we should think of the manner of life which our demands necessitate; and endeavour, as far as may be, to make all our needs such as in the supply of them, raise, as

> well as feed, the poor. (VIII, 264)

He followed this assertion with a "parable-like" example of the "gem cutters" which was the first of many Ruskin used to underline the shallow and irresponsible nature of the upper classes:

> Consider the large number of men whose lives are employed by civilized nations in cutting facets upon jewels. There is much dexterity of hand, patience, and ingenuity thus bestowed, which are simply burned out in the blaze of the tiara, without so far as I see, bestowing any pleasure upon those who wear or who behold, at all compensatory for the loss of life and mental power which are involved in the employment of the workman. He would be far more healthily and happily sustained by being set to carve stone; certain qualities of his mind, for which there is no room in his present occupation, would develop themselves. (VIII, 264-65)

Ruskin's interest had shifted from the relationship between good art and healthy, happy men and women, to that between working conditions and quality of life for working men and women. By the end of **The Seven Lamps of Architecture** in 1849 Ruskin had recognized the need for social change and his own role in encouraging that change.

Ruskin wrote the three volumes of **The Stones of Venice** and two more volumes of **Modern Painters** (Volumes Three and Four), however, before devoting his full energies to defining social problems and outlining measures to remedy them. **Modern Painters** III and IV, reflecting social concerns, continue Ruskin's interest in nature and in Turner's art; but **The Stones of Venice** is directly related to the changing emphasis already noticed in **Seven Lamps.** In **Ruskin and the Landscape Feeling,** Townsend excellently analyzed the movement of Ruskin's thought from **Seven Lamps** to **Stones of Venice,** and the change in focus from **Modern Painters** to **Stones.** In his summary of the movement from the early volumes of **Modern Painters** to the last volume of **Stones** Townsend aptly characterized the social shift in Ruskin's aesthetic writings:

> What a change between **Modern Painters** I and **The Stones of Venice** III! In 1843, the youth, John Ruskin, had visions of raising mankind to moral nobility by inspiring artists to view subject matter in the light of natural theology. The artist stretched out a helping hand to the members of society and bade them accompany him into the realms of the Almighty. He painted the earth as a Paradise. The net result of **The Stones of Venice** III was a fairly valid demonstration of the thesis that it takes a healthy society, economically, politically, and morally to produce the art which in **Modern Painters** I was to be the salvation of society.{29}

In **The Stones of Venice,** the second architectural treatise, Ruskin illustrated Gothic architecture through the relationship between the moral temper of a society and the work or art that society produced; his analysis of Venetian architectural history supports the claims made in "The Lamp of Obedience." This treatise represents the final step before the concentrated social concern of **A Joy For Ever** and the major works written after 1859.

In Volume One, "The Foundations," Ruskin established the characteristics of Gothic architecture; in Volume Two, "The Sea Stories," he described the nature of the Gothic Period; and in Volume Three, "The Fall," he outlined the deterioration of Gothic. The first and least read volume is analytical, technical, and extremely detailed in description. In it are explanations of the structural aspects of Gothic (and, in fact, of almost all forms of) architecture. Whole chapters are devoted to "The Wall Base" (chapter iv), "The Roof" (chapter viii), and "The Capital" (chapter ix). Ruskin showed how Gothic structural form is always consistent with the principles set forth in **Seven Lamps** and how the Renaissance, the period following Gothic, corrupted these principles for secular reasons. In the second and third volumes he traced the changes in Gothic architecture through a transitional period to its decline beginning in 1418, a date synonymous in Ruskin's view with the emergence of the Renaissance in Italy.{30} In Volume Two he examined the Gothic Period for the kinds and conditions of work which nurture the minds and souls of men and women. In Volume Three Ruskin asserted that during the Renaissance work was empty and pompous and the workers unhappy because they were treated like slaves and were expected to reproduce sculptural ornament for the sake of luxury alone. Following his conclusions about Gothic and Renaissance work in this third volume, he analyzed nineteenth-century work as a repetitiously meaningless activity which by its boredom and fatigue made happiness and fruitful production impossible. Ruskin's careful descriptions of the architecture of these three periods and his moral assessments of them led him to infer that the grandeur and variety of Gothic architecture indicates a society that was moral, happy, and healthy; the geometrical perfection of Renaissance architecture indicates secular luxury and a slavish people; the monotony and the shoddy workmanship of modern architecture indicate a degenerate, unhappy, unhealthy populace.

In his preface to the third edition of **The Stones of Venice** (1874) Ruskin rebuked his critics for overlooking the central concern of the three-volume work:

> The relation of the art of Venice to her moral temper, which is the chief subject of the book, and that of the life of the workman to his work, which is the most important practical principle developed in it, have both been ignored. (IX, 14)

Though this preface states the premise of the whole of **Stones**, not until Chapter Six of the second volume, "The Nature of Gothic," does Ruskin's humanitarian vision of the workman and his society coalesce. The Fabian Society, in a tract entitled "John Ruskin and Social Ethics," claimed that the famous chapter "contained in embryo all [of Ruskin's] later sociological and economic teaching."{31}

In his attempt to define "the true nature of Gothic architecture" in this famous chapter, Ruskin examined the physical form of the buildings and speculated on the feelings and concerns of the builders:

> Gothic architecture has external forms and internal elements . . . . It is not enough that it has the Form, if it have [sic] not also the power and life. It is not enough that it has the Power if it have not the form. We must therefore inquire . . . and determine first, what is the Mental Expression and secondly, what the Material Form of Gothic Architecture. (X, 183)

This section on "external forms" provides the groundwork for recognizing and analyzing Venetian Gothic building; Ruskin defined the outward forms of Gothic by examining four structural characteristics: the rise and gable of the roof, the pointed arches of principal windows and doors, foliated apertures and cusped arches, and the use of shafts with bases and capitals to support the arches. Understandably, Ruskin's assessment of the "mental expression" of Gothic architecture--examined under the six elements of the purest Gothic which listed in order of importance are Savageness, Changefulness, Naturalism, Grotesqueness, Rigidity, and Redundance--most clearly reveal his early social voice. His definitions and illustrations of the six elements, to which he attributed a moral significance, provide a view "of the various moral or imaginative elements which composed the inner spirit of Gothic" (X, 245).

According to Ruskin all six characteristics indicate in the worker a freedom of soul and mind non-existent in nineteenth-century England. Furthermore they reflect the "nature" of the Gothic worker and provide a contrast to and an analogy for the faults of social and economic thought and of working conditions in the nineteenth century. This contrast and analogy were most clearly and consciously used by Ruskin in his discussion of "savageness," the first of the six elements of mental expression. "Savageness," Ruskin stressed, is the most striking characteristic of Gothic architecture, and his discussion of it is the most relevant of the six to his social criticism. In it he defined his Theory of Imperfection, prepared for in **Seven Lamps**. This definition enabled him to praise the Gothic and condemn the Modern. When Ruskin considered the nineteenth century, he began to establish what would become his social and economic policies; in this section on "savageness" he criticized modes of production in England and condemned the division of labour then necessary to mass production in the factory systems; he repeated these criticisms and condemnations in **A Joy For Ever** and expanded them in **Unto This Last.**

He began by stressing the necessity for man to admit to and accept his own imperfections. Recalling his ideas as expressed in "The Lamp of Life," he underlined this necessity in his definitions of the words "perfect" and "imperfect":

> Hitherto I have used the words imperfect and perfect merely to distinguish between work grossly unskillful, and work executed with average precision and science; and I have been pleading that any degree of unskillfulness should

> be admitted, so only that the labourer's mind had room for expression. But, accurately speaking, no good work whatever can be perfect, and *the demand for perfection is always a sign of a misunderstanding of the ends of art.* (X, 202)

A work technically imperfect but done with the mind and the heart (for example, Gothic) is far better than the most exact form done in slavish imitation (for example, Renaissance). To design to perfection in things is "a noble character in the abstract, but becomes ignoble when it causes us . . . to prefer the perfectness of the lower nature to the imperfection of the higher." We must not, wrote Ruskin, "set the meaner thing in its narrow accomplishment, above the nobler thing, in its mighty progress" (X, 190-91). Sounding much like Robert Browning in "Andrea del Sarto,"{32} he explained that to reach his potential man must move, both in art and in life, beyond that which he can do perfectly. Not only does the desire for perfection limit man's potential, but it also degrades labour by forcing workers to produce "the exactness of a line;" in England the workers "feel that the kind of labour to which they are condemned is verily a degrading one, and makes them less than men" (X, 201).

Here Ruskin moved from a criticism of the kind of labour that results from the corrupt ideal of perfection to comments on the value that should be felt by all men in their work. Imperfection, in contrast, is a sign of life, as Ruskin earlier established in "The Lamp of Life" and continued in **Modern Painters** V ("Ideas of Relation," chapter ii, "Task of the Least"). No good work can ever be perfect, in his view, because

> no great man ever stops working till he has reached his point of failure . . . . The second reason is, that imperfection is in some sort essential to all that we know of life. It is the sign of life in a mortal body, that is to say, of a state of progress and change. Nothing that lives is, or can be, rigidly perfect.

At the conclusion of this explanation, Ruskin touched on the social issue:

> To banish imperfection is to destroy expression, to check exertion, to paralyze vitality. (X, 202-04)

As a way of exemplifying the relationship between life and imperfection, Ruskin categorized the systems of architectural ornament. He defined the three kinds of ornament by referring to Chapter Thirty-one, "Treatment of Ornament," from **Stones** Volume One:

> 1. Servile ornament, in which the execution or power of the inferior workman is entirely subjected to the intellect of the higher;--
> 2. Constitutional ornament, in which the executive inferior power is, to a certain point, emancipated and independent, having a will of its own, yet confessing its inferiority and rendering obedience to higher powers;-- and
> 3. Revolutionary ornament, in which no executive inferiority is admitted at all. (X, 188-89)

Ruskin aligned the Greek, Ninevite, and Egyptian periods with the servile ornament of the first category and the Gothic, also called the Christian medieval, with the second category called constitutional ornament which recognizes the value of each workman. In a brief footnote Ruskin aligned the Renaissance with the third category in which inferior detail becomes principal. The Greeks, the Assyrians, and the Egyptians, in their desire for perfection in art and architecture, made slaves of the inferior workmen. Because the Greek master-workman could not endure imperfection in anything, he appointed those beneath him to copy geometrical forms with absolute precision of line and rule. The Assyrians and Egyptians lowered their standard of "perfection" but like the Greeks forced the worker to follow that standard without deviation. "The workman was in both systems a slave," Ruskin asserted. In the medieval, and especially Christian, system this kind of slavery was abolished. Christianity, in recognizing the value of every soul and confessing man's imperfection, bestows dignity on the efforts of all men and encourages the vitality of the mind and heart. Rather than dictating to workers what they must do and forcing them to narrow, but perfect, accomplishments in their work, Christianity tells each man to:

> Do what you can, and confess frankly what you are unable to do; neither let your effort be shortened for fear of failure nor your confession silenced for fear of shame. (X, 190){33}

Ruskin condemned the Renaissance and nineteenth-century England for following the premises of the Greek rather than those of the Christian medieval period. The savageness or roughness in Gothic architecture, is an admission to and acceptance of man's imperfections and a sign "of the life and liberty of every workman who struck the stone" (X, 193). Ruskin's requirement that every man be allowed scope and encouragement to realize his potential is at the heart of all of his economic and social thought.

Ruskin moved logically from the philosophical concept of imperfection to the practical problems of the nineteenth-century factory system. Once he had established that workers must be allowed to think, to feel, and to express themselves, he had a basis from which to criticize the conditions of employment in England, from which to condemn a system which dehumanized the worker. He urged that all workers be encouraged to use their minds, their imaginations, and their emotions at work. The machine-like precision of nineteenth-century work, Ruskin lamented, did not allow for individual expression. To all employers he preached:

> You must either make a tool of the creature, or a man of him. You cannot make both. Men were not intended to work with the accuracy of tools, to be precise and perfect in all their actions. If you will have that precision out of them . . . you must unhumanize [sic] them. (X, 192)

Employers and political leaders are major targets for Ruskin's criticism in the later social writings. Just as the politician must assume responsibility for the health and happiness of every citizen, the employer must recognize his responibility for the health and happiness of every worker.

In one rhetorically awesome paragraph Ruskin condemned Adam Smith's glorification of the division of labour **(Wealth of Nations)**; vehemently criticized the effects of industrial cities on the men who worked in their factories; indirectly defined the true wealth of a healthy, happy populace in contrast to the false wealth of an economical system unconcerned with its workers; and demanded for all men work that was healthy spiritually and mentally as well as physically. Using Smith's own example of the production of pins, he countered the argument posed in **Wealth of Nations** and supported by the industrialists of nineteenth-century England:

> We have much studied and much perfected, of late, the great civilized invention of the division of labour; only we give it a false name. It is not, truly speaking, the labour that is divided; but the men:--Divided into mere segments of men--broken into small fragments and crumbs of life; so that all the little piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin or the head of a nail. Now it is a good and desireable thing, truly, to make many pins in a day; but if we could only see with what crystal sand their points were polished,--sand of human soul, much to be magnified before it can be discerned for what it is--we should think there might be some loss in it also. (X, 196)

Though mass production "is a good and desireable thing," Ruskin realized that the effects of it on men must be considered in any economic study or policy. Against the economic wealth that comes from "blanding cotton, strengthening steel and refining sugar" Ruskin set what he believed to be the true wealth of any nation: the advantages which come from each living spirit, from each healthy and happy man, woman, and child. He continued this paragraph with the assertion that the only way to improve England economically and socially is

> by a right understanding, on the part of all classes, of what kinds of labour are good for men, raising them, and making them happy; by a determined sacrifice of such convenience, or beauty; and by equally determined demand for the products and results of healthy and ennobling labour. (X, 196)

Ruskin offered advice on methods of regulating the demand for "healthy" products and "healthy" labour (paragraph #17, for example), but soon reverted to his discussion of Gothic architecture. Nevertheless, he was conscious that he had once again entered a new realm of criticism:

> I should be led far from the matter in hand, if I were to pursue this interesting subject. Enough, I trust, has been said to show the reader that the rudeness or imperfection of Gothic is . . . one of the most noble characters of Christian architecture. (X, 202)

Ruskin's ideas about employment and production, the "interesting subject" referred to in this passage, establishes the main directions for his social criticism. His message to the industrial and political leaders of the country included his demand that a man's work stimulate his mind to promote thought, creativity, and individuality. In **Modern Painters** Ruskin asserted that art must do the same things for both artist and viewer. The demand for stimulating work constitutes a theme common to the writings representing Ruskin's early social voice.

In **Seven Lamps** he had assumed a connection between a man's social condition and the state of his mind and soul. As he continued to write social criticism, Ruskin developed the premise that a man's soul and mind can be improved, not by man's participation in some transcendental art but by reforming the conditions of society.

"Changefulness," the second significant characteristic of Gothic architecture, follows logically from Ruskin's theory of imperfection and the related assertions about production, employment, and true wealth. Change or variety, as opposed to sameness or monotony, is, Ruskin explained, proof of the living mind and imagination of the Gothic worker and proof of an inferior workman's independence in his work. Savageness and Changefulness, the two essentials of all good architecture, represent the confession of Imperfection and the confession of the Desire for Change. "Our building must confess," Ruskin explained, "that we have not reached the perfection we can imagine, and cannot rest in the condition we have attained. If we pretend to have reached either perfection or satisfaction, we have degraded ourselves and our work" (X, 214). Nineteenth-century architecture, which embodies neither Savageness or Changefulness according to Ruskin, stands as evidence of the low assessment of human life in the social and economic thought of the century.

In his discussion of the last four characteristics of Gothic--Naturalism, Grotesqueness, Rigidity, and

Redundance--Ruskin repeated the social themes introduced in his explications of Savageness and Changefulness, and restated earlier aesthetic theory. The evidence of a love of nature in Gothic architecture is consistent with Ruskin's views expressed in **Modern Painters**. Nature, by its powers of edification, projects the most deserving subject matter for artist and architect alike. It makes sense, therefore, that Gothic art and architecture--representing the work of happy, healthy artists--reflectss a love of nature. The Grotesque in Gothic architecture reveals the worker's imagination at play in his work. Rigidity, the tense energy of the Gothic line (weight, thrust, and angles), illustrates the worker's strength of character. And the final characteristic of Gothic architecture, Redundance or generosity, is the "uncalculating bestowal of the wealth of its labour" (X, 243). The richness of decoration indicates the enthusiasm of the workers, their generosity or self-sacrifice, and their sympathy with the fullness and wealth apparent in nature. The enthusiasm and generosity seen in Gothic architecture were nowhere evident, Ruskin observed, in the buildings of his own century.

In this sixth chapter of **The Stones of Venice** II, Ruskin characterized the faults of his own society by comparing the nineteenth century with the Gothic Period. Though he made earlier social statements in **The Seven Lamps of Architecture** when he looked at the work and asked if the workers were happy ("The Lamp of Life"), in **Stones** he boldly proclaimed the right of all men to be happy in their life and in their work. In **A Joy For Ever** Ruskin went a logical step further in developing happiness in work as an economic principle guaranteeing increased output and improved products. At the root of his demands for healthy and happy work are Ruskin's condemnations of industrialism, of a system of work and production which made tools of men, crushing their souls and permitting neither happiness nor individual fulfilment. In "The Nature of Gothic" Ruskin used his views of Gothic architecture polemically to attack the economic and social dictums of nineteenth-century industrialism.

In **A Joy For Ever** (1857) the key ideas already stated in the architectural studies are developed into sustained arguments against popular political and economic notions. The moral interpretation of nature and the belief in "Natural Laws," so strongly expressed in **Modern Painters**, reappear in the two lectures of **A Joy For Ever.** The concern for the individuality of all men and the insistence that the value and happiness of life depends on the healthy development of mind and body, issues which evolve throughout the volumes of the architectural treatises, influence the ideas in both lectures. The comments on employment, production, and economic theory which appear sporadically in all three of the art studies are here logically introduced and discussed, preparing the way for the major economic texts, **Unto This Last** and **Munera Pulveris**, and for **Time and Tide**, the lengthy social statement to the workers of England.

Ruskin deliberately focused on social issues in **A Joy For Ever**, thus manipulating the occasion of the Art Treasures Exhibition into an opportunity to present the social and economic ideas so long developing in his writings during the fifties. An analysis of the whole text reveals the strategic movement of ideas from the least controversial in the opening pages, to more debatable positions and arguments in each of the four areas of discussion, to his most radical ideas to date in the closing statements and the Addenda which was added at the time of publication (December, 1857): Ruskin ended Lecture One with an interpretation of a frescoe by Ambrogia Lorenzetti (1337) which "represents, by means of symbolical figures, the principles of Good Civic Government and of Good Government in general" (XVI, 54); he concluded Lecture Two with direct advice to the governors of England, and with his comparison of "Wealth ill-used" and "Wealth well-used" (XVI, 102-03), thus previewing **Unto This Last**; in the Addenda Ruskin included advice on education, production, and paternal government. In these final notes he also included diatribes against politicians, industrialists, and businessmen who "apply themselves to the task of growing rich" (XV, 138).

With his opening comment on "true wealth" Ruskin immediately prepared his listeners for something beyond a critique of the exhibition. In fifteen pages of text, preceding the beginning of the first lecture, entitled "Discovery and Application," Ruskin revealed his purpose:

> Now, you must have patience with me, if . . . I dwell a little on certain points of general political science already known or established: for though thus, as I believe, established, some which I shall have occasion to rest arguments on are not yet by any means universally accepted . . . . I shall, therefore, take leave to trespass on your patience with a few elementary statements in the outset, and with the expression of some general principles, here and there, in the course of our particular inquiry. (XVI, 18)

Ruskin disguised the "particular inquiry" of **A Joy For Ever** in the first lecture as "The Discovery and Application of Art" and in the second as "The Accumulation and Distribution of Art." In fact he used these titles as premises for social and economic criticism. The "discovery" of any vocation by means of proper *education* and the "application" of all kinds of work, stressing the *conditions of employment*, are the more accurate topics of "inquiry" in Lecture One. The "inquiry" in Lecture Two examines the "accumulation" of the results of work, of *production* and its motives, and the "distribution" of those results by *economic principles* (italics are mine).

Ruskin criticized orthodox political and economic thinking, continuing the attack started in the architectural studies. The "points of general political science" in the early pages of **A Joy For Ever** include attacks on *laissez-faire* arguments for freedom, while presenting Ruskin's arguments for responsibility towards others, for laws to protect all citizens, for paternalistic government and employers, and for an acceptance of an attitude of responsibility and restraint by citizens and workers. Related to the criticisms of the *laissez-faire* position are Ruskin's references to Poor Law amendments and his allusions to Malthusian rationalizations:

> Wherever you see want, or misery, or degradation, in this world about you, there, be sure, either industry has been wanting, or industry has been in error. It is not accident, it is not Heaven commanded calamity, it is not the original and inevitable evil of man's nature, which fill your streets with lamentation, and your graves with prey. (XVI, 19)

In contrast to the supporters of *laissez-faire*, Ruskin demanded legislative action and national law to prevent "want, misery, and degradation." He quoted William Wordsworth's "Essay on the Poor Law Amendment Bill" (1835) as an early statement of his own beliefs:

> May we not still contend for the duty of a Christian government, standing *in loco parentis* towards all its subjects, to make such effectual provision that no one shall be in danger of perishing either through the neglect or harshness of its legislation? . . . It follows that the right of the State to require the services of its members, even to the jeoparding [sic] of their lives in the common defense, establishes a right in the people (not to be gainsaid by utilitarians and economists) to public support when, from any cause, they may be unable to support themselves.{34}

When the lectures of **A Joy For Ever** were published, Ruskin included "Right to Public Support" (Addenda, Note 2) as an expansion of these beliefs.

The economics of capitalism, supported by the democratic notion that all men are equally capable of succeeding, and the utilitarian concept of self-interest as the prime motive for all activity--social, economic, and political--come under attack in the second lecture. Once again the lack of legislative involvement and the absence of true humanitarian feelings of responsibility are stressed as the hallmarks of an economic system that supports competition to the detriment of a country's citizens. Of competition Ruskin declared simply and directly "that the time and powers of the nation are wasted . . . in wretched struggling against each other" (XVI, 96). More specifically, economic competition that favours the rich and the intelligent is the focus of his final attack. Though Ruskin posed questions which he would answer more forcefully in the economic treatises than in this earlier lecture, he took his demands for responsibility to their logical conclusion. The full passage reveals the humanitarian appeal of his argument, while incorporating metaphors of self-interest which recur throughout the later social criticism:

> Why is one man richer than another? Because he is more industrious, more persevering, and more sagacious. Well, who made him more persevering or more sagacious than others? That power of endurance, that quickness of apprehension, that calmness of judgment, which enable him to seize the opportunities that others lose, and persist

> in the lines of conduct in which others fail --are these not talents? --are they not, in the present state of the world, among the most distinguished and influential of mental gifts? And is it not wonderful, that while we should be utterly ashamed to use a superiority of body, in order to thrust our weaker companions aside from some place of advantage, we unhesitatingly use our superiorities of mind to thrust them back from whatever good that strength of mind can attain? You would be indignant if you saw a strong man walk into a theatre or a lecture-room, and, calmly choosing the best place, take his feeble neighbour by the shoulder, and turn him out of it into the back seats, or the street. You would be equally indignant if you saw a stout fellow thrust himself up to a table where some hungry children were being fed, and reach his arm over their heads and take their bread from them, But you are not the least indignant if, when a man has stoutness of thought and swiftness of capacity, and, instead of being long-armed only, has the much greater gift of being long-headed --you think it perfectly just that he should use his intellect to take the bread out of the mouths of all the other men in the town who are of the same trade with him; or use his breadth and sweep of sight to gather some branch of the commerce of the country into one great cobweb, of which he is himself to be the central spider, making every thread vibrate with the points of his claws, and commanding every avenue with the facets of his eyes. You see no injustice in this. (XVI, 100)

The plea for paternalism which first appears in "The Lamp of Obedience" is repeated in the final pages of **A Joy For Ever** as an argument for ending the injustice this passage so vividly portrays. The first note in the Addenda to **A Joy For Ever**, "Fatherly Authority," provides one of Ruskin's most concise attempts to justify a paternal government which would support regulation law in all areas of politics and economics. The term "paternal government" was not coined by Ruskin. In fact, in the opening pages of **A Joy For Ever** he pointed out that "we can hardly read a few sentences on any political subject without running a chance of crossing the phrase 'paternal government'" (XVI, 25). However, Ruskin asserted that most political thinkers do not understand or accept the need for a concerned authority in such a system. In a footnote to this passage E. T. Cook suggested that other political thinkers, too, were at odds with the meaning of Paternalism:

> See, for instance, Macaulay's Essay on Gladstone's **Church and State**: "Mr. Gladstone conceives that the duties of governments are paternal; a doctrine which we shall not believe till he can show us some government which loves its subjects as a father loves a child." (XVI, 25)

Macaulay and Ruskin, it would seem, shared their ideas about paternalism. Earlier in **A Joy For Ever** Ruskin had written: "as we advance in our social knowledge, we shall endeavour to make our government Paternal," but added that he did not have "time to insist on the nature or details of government of this kind" (XVI, 26). Though **Time and Tide** was to be the most complete statement of his vision of a paternalistic government, this earlier work introduced many of the elements of his later vision which anticipated social welfare policy of the twentieth century. Ruskin suggested that a paternal government protect its citizens by means of laws against all categories of crime and of social policies which guarantee healthy living and working conditions and education for all; the citizens, in turn, must obey those laws and contribute to the social policies in any way possible (for example, the wealthy would have to contribute financially).

Throughout these first social lectures Ruskin's pleas directly oppose nineteenth-century tendencies: co-operation against competition in social and political policy-making; government involvement and regulation, combined with an acceptance of personal responsibilities, against the *laissez-faire* stand so popular in Manchester during the fifties; and paternalistic government against "democratic" ideas of equality and freedom.{35}

In "Distribution," the last discussion in the two lectures, Ruskin examined conditions of employment, quality of production, and the responsibility of both producer and consumer--economic concerns which are central to **Unto This Last** and **Munera Pulveris.** He presented his economic ideas in the same way he had presented his social views, as a series of oppositions--Ruskinian thought on one side, orthodox thought on the opposite. Ruskin talked about "Healthy Work and Wasted Labour" (also called "Productive and Unproductive Labour"); "Covetable and Serviceable Things;" and "Selfish and Unselfish Buying." The notes in the Addenda (especially Note 5, "Invention of Wants;" Note 7, "Pilots of the State;" and Note 8, "Silk and Purple"), expanding on these topics, clearly indicate the more radical directions in Ruskin's later writings.

The economic arguments all rest on the early assertions that true wealth contributes to the well-being of the members of a society. Ruskin continued the spider-image of the man of commerce who takes advantage of the vulnerability of others in the market place: "wealth ill-used [is] as the net of the spider, entangling and destroying: the wealth well used is as the net of the sacred fisher who gathers souls of men out of the deep" (XVI, 102-03). This image, foreshadowing discussions of "Illth and Wealth" in **Unto This Last**, captures what Ruskin believed had to form a central precept for any economic decision. The precept of "Wealth well used" echoes the social ideas presented in the aesthetic works while at the same time it points out the later social directions: the work that men are paid to do must contribute to their health and happiness; in addition, a man's work must produce something useful, something that in itself contributes to the health and happiness of the worker and of others. As Ruskin explained in the final note of the Addenda, "Silk and Purple," unselfish buying means buying only products which contribute to the health of society, which support healthy working conditions, and which fulfil society's needs.

The discussion of "Covetable and Serviceable Things," related to the above explanations of useful objects and unselfish buying forms a major theme in the social and economic works after **A Joy For Ever**. Ruskin's insistence that the differences between covetable and serviceable things be recognized, appears in his diatribes against the irresponsible use of wealth. A combined criticism of nineteenth-century ideas about economy and of the irresponsible man of wealth forms the earliest statement of this theme:

> The want of instruction in even the simplest principles of commerce and economy, which hitherto has disgraced our schools and universities, has indeed been the cause of ruin or total inutility of life to multitudes of our men of estate; but this deficiency in our public education cannot exist much longer, and it appears to be highly advantageous for the State that a certain number of persons distinguished by race [a reference to nobles and major land owners] should be permitted to set examples of wise expenditure, whether in the advancement of science, or in patronage of art and literature; only they must see to it that they take their right standing more firmly than they have done hitherto, for the position of a rich man in relation to those around him is, in our present real life, and is also contemplated generally by political economists as being, precisely the reverse of what it ought to be. A rich man ought to be continually examining how he may spend his money for the advantage of others: at present, others are continually plotting how they may beguile him into spending it apparently for his own.
>
> . . . .
>
> Anybody who can invent a new want for him is supposed to be a benefactor to society: and thus the energies of the poorer people about him are continually directed to the production of covetable, instead of serviceable, things; and the rich man has the general aspect of a fool, plotted against by the world. Whereas the real aspect which he ought to have is that of a person wiser than others, entrusted with the management of a larger quantity of capital, which he administers for the profit of all, directing each man to the labour which is most healthy for him, and most serviceable for the community.
> (Addenda, Note 7, "Pilots of the State"; XVI, 128-29.)

Ruskin's hierarchical ideas about the ruling class here and later in **Time and Tide** (1867) closely resemble those held by Benjamin Disraeli and the Young England Movement (circa 1842-50). Disraeli and the Young Englanders also saw the aristocracy as the class best suited to rule. And they, too, stressed that the nobility be re-educated so as to accept its social responsibilty. In his novels, **Coningsby** (1844) and **Sybil** (1845), Disraeli emphasized the importance of the paternal role of the aristocray while satirizing the nineteenth-century politician and his democratic ideology.

As well as indicating a prejudice in favour of the aristocracy as leaders, the above passage from **A Joy For Ever** underlines a major fallacy in Ruskin's economic thought. His faith in humanitarian appeals and his belief in the innate goodness of man allowed him to believe that a society in which a few controlled the wealth will work for the benefit of all once the wealthy understand and accept their responsibility to others; time has failed to substantiate this Christian hope. Ruskin's belief that support for healthy work and serviceable products will improve society, however, is sound and logical. In his arguments against "covetable things," or luxuries, he made it clear that he was not opposed to the production or purchase of luxury unless it prevents a man from acquiring the necessities of life. "Luxuries," Ruskin explained, "whether national or personal, must be paid for by labour withdrawn from useful things; and no nation has a right to indulge in them until all its poor are comfortably housed and fed" (Addenda, Note 5, "Invention of New Wants"; XVI, 125). In addition, he wanted to ensure a realization that wise buying can increase the economy, or the wealth of the nation:

> Perhaps the matter may be made clearer to you, however, by a more familiar instance. If a schoolboy goes out in the morning with five shillings in his pocket, and comes home penniless, having spent his all in tarts, principal and interest are gone, and fruiterer and baker are enriched. So far so good. But suppose the schoolboy, instead, has bought a book and a knife; principal and interest are gone, and bookseller and cutler are enriched. But the schoolboy is enriched also, and may help his school fellows next day with knife and book, instead of lying in bed and incurring a debt to the doctor. (Note 5; XVI, 124)

These ideas are also expressed in the first lecture of **A Joy For Ever** in relationship to the luxury in dress. Ruskin explained that "the point which it is our special business to consider is, not whether costliness of dress is contrary to charity; but whether it is not contrary to mere worldly wisdom: whether, even supposing we knew that splendour of dress did not cost suffering or hunger, we might not put the splendour better in other things than dress" (XVI, 52). Discussions of "Covetable and Serviceable Things" continue in **Unto This Last** (XVII, 114) and **Munera Pulveris** (XVII, 278).

In addition to expanding the social ideas introduced in the aesthetic works and preparing for the economic directions of the works of the sixties, **A Joy For Ever** reminds readers why Ruskin has so often been called a prophet for his age.{36} Many of his ideas and much of his advice here and in the works which follow are common policy in the twentieth century.{37} His prophetic recommendations include considering censorship (XVI, 120), creating a National Society to buy and protect art (XVI, 79),{38} ensuring pensions for the aged and sick (XVI, 113-114), and establishing wage controls that vary with the price of food or the cost of living (XVI, 112). The advice that in Ruskin's time seemed most radical and in our own century seems so sound is based on the concept of a paternal government as the necessary alternative to nineteenth-century liberalism.

Prophetic, too, are his ideas about the legal, labour, and education systems, ideas which evolve from Ruskin's concern for the development of each man's potential, expressed in the volumes of **Modern Painters** and the architectural works. He realized that laws had to be rehabilitative as well as punitive: "National law has hitherto been only judicial; contented, that is, with an endeavour to prevent and punish violence and crime." Ruskin speculated that the advancement of social knowledge would lead governments

> to establish such laws and authorities as may at once direct us in our occupation, protect us against our follies, and visit us in our distresses: [the result will be] a government which shall repress dishonesty, as now it

> punishes theft; which shall show how the discipline of the masses may be brought to aid the toils of peace, as discipline of the masses has hitherto knot [sic] the sinews of battle; a government which shall have its soldiers of the ploughshare as well as its soldiers of the sword. (XVI, 26)

In **Unto This Last** Ruskin stated that in this one phrase, "Soldiers of the Ploughshare as well as soldiers of the Sword," his "principles of Political Economy were all involved" (XVII, 74). By "Soldiers of the Ploughshare" Ruskin meant the "disciplined masses," expressing restraint and responsibility, working for "peace," a peace free from all strife, including competitive action.{39}

As well as foreseeing a social function for law beyond the judicial, Ruskin looked ahead to twentieth-century union halls and professional associations:

> I believe most firmly, that as the laws of national prosperity get familiar to us, we shall more and more cast our toil into social and communicative systems; and that one of the first means of our doing so, will be the re-establishing guilds of every important trade in a vital, not formal, condition;--that there will be a great council or government house for the members of every trade . . . with minor council-halls in other cities; and to each council-hall, officers attached, whose first business may be to examine into the circumstances of every operative, in that trade, who chooses to report himself to them when out of work, and to set him to work, if he is indeed able and willing, at a fixed rate of wages, determined at regular periods in the council-meetings; and whose next duty may be to bring reports before the council of all improvements made in the business. (XVI, 97)

In the Addenda Ruskin included two notes which expand the role of these council-halls and their relationship to the education of tradesmen. "There ought to be government establishments for every trade, in which all youths who desired it should be received as apprentices on their leaving school" (Note 2, "The Right to Public Support"; XVI, 112).

In discussions of education Ruskin touched on issues as far ranging as the need for a learning environment in the classroom to recommendations for state supported schools for all. He suggested that the classroom be extended to include outdoor instruction, explaining that "a quiet glade of forest, or the nook of a lake shore, are worth all the school rooms in Christendom" (XVI, 90). In the third note of the Addenda, "Trial Schools," he admitted that

> it is not, of course, in my power here to enter into details of schemes of education; and it will be long before the results of experiments now in progress will give data for the solution of the most difficult questions connected with the subject, of which the principal one is the mode in which the chance of advancement in life is to be extended to all. (XVI, 120)

Echoing earlier comments on the relationship between a man's work and his health and happiness, his ideas about the role of education include the development of man's intellectual, emotional, and physical needs. The directions of these and of all of Ruskin's social ideas which anticipate twentieth-century thinking are summarized in his claim that

> every so named soul of man claims from every other such soul, protection and education in childhood,--help or punishment in middle life,--reward of relief, if needed, in old age; all of these should be completely and unstintingly given; and they can only be given by the organization of such a system as I have described. (XVI, 115)

The major texts of the sixties provide a focused view of that system.

As two additional notes in **A Joy For Ever**--"Public Favour" and "Economy of Literature"--indicate, Ruskin was aware of the radical nature of his ideas, was prepared for the opposition that they would arouse, and expected misinterpretations and misunderstandings. In "Economy of Literature" (Addenda, Note 6) he warned readers to pay close attention to his ideas and to read carefully and patiently. In "Public Favour" (Addenda, Note 4) he made it very clear that he would not be swayed by the opinions of the majority. Recall his claim that

> Your great man always at last comes to see something the public don't [sic] see. This something he will assuredly persist in asserting, whether with tongue or pencil, to be as *he* sees it, not as *they* see it; and all the world in a heap on the other side, will not get him to say otherwise. (XVI, 122)

His major social, economic, and political assertions make **A Joy For Ever** a seminal statement, not only in the context of nineteenth-century debates about the changing role of government in England, but in the context of Ruskin's career as a major nineteenth-century writer. Logically linked by ideas, his works form a progressive social statement. Just as the art works introduce ideas expanded upon in **A Joy For Ever**, so **A Joy For Ever** introduces ideas further expanded upon in the major works of the following decade: **Unto This Last**; **Munera Pulveris**; and **Time and Tide**. Ruskin's concept of "true wealth," for example, is a central idea which, directly related to his insistence that all men find happiness and beauty in their lives, forms part of the link between the "great art trilogy" and the social writings starting with **A Joy For Ever**. Though in **Modern Painters**, **Seven Lamps**, and **Stones of Venice** Ruskin included passages defining true wealth, he most boldly presented its definition in **Unto This Last** (1860), the political-economic treatise published three years after **A Joy For Ever**. The evolving social theories evident in the writings on art culminate in the simple statement that

> THERE IS NO WEALTH BUT LIFE. Life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others. (**Unto This Last**; XVII, 105)

His equation between wealth and the enrichment of life forms a theme common to his writings on art and on society. In the two lectures given at Manchester Ruskin used his definition of wealth to describe the ultimate function of art. He opened **A Joy For Ever**, explaining:

> I should not have ventured to ask you to listen

> to me this evening, unless I had entertained a profound respect for wealth--true wealth, that is to say . . . and the distinction between real and false wealth. (XVI, 15-16)

If art fails to contribute to the physical, spiritual, and intellectual health of men and women, then it cannot be considered as a part of a country's wealth. This pronouncement develops from Ruskin's earliest humanitarian concerns, leading from discussions on art to social questions about man's needs.

By the time Ruskin finished his art trilogy he saw as his most important work his criticism of society. The final chapter of **Modern Painters** V (1860) reflects the transition which occurred during the seventeen years it took to write his major art works:

> Looking back over what I have written I find that I have only now the power of ending this work,--it being time that it should end, but not of "concluding" it; for it has led me into fields of infinite inquiry. (VIII, 441)

In the last half of this final volume of **Modern Painters**, Ruskin incorporated his social theories: in Part Eight, "Of Ideas of Relations: --First of Invention Formal," Chapter One, "The Law of Help," he stressed his ideas of co-operation; in Chapter Two, "The Task of the Least," he emphasized his Theory of Imperfection; and in Chapter Three, "The Rule of the Greatest," he repeated his arguments against the claims of democracy and equality. At the end of **Modern Painters** Ruskin confessed his "doubt respecting the real use to mankind of [Turner's], or any other transcendent art" (VIII, 441). He openly expressed these doubts about the possibility of art improving humanity in his minor art criticism as well. In an evaluation of Giotto's paintings (1860), for example, Ruskin admitted that he could not conceive of

> any revival of great art to be possible among us while the nation continues in its present temper. As long as it can bear to see misery and squalor in its streets, it can neither invent nor accept human beauty in its pictures; and so long as in passion of rivalry, or thrift of gain, it crushes the roots of happiness and foresakes the ways of peace, the great souls whom it may chance to produce will pass away from it helpless, in error, in wrath, or in silence.{40}

Because of his concern for the condition of nineteenth-century society, Ruskin gave precedence to its improvement over the "revival of great art" in his major writings of the next decade. His social criticism of the sixties represents the logical outgrowth of earlier questions about the function and relevance of art at a time when the basic needs of the populace were being ignored.

Notes

1. William Scott Durrant, "From Art to Social Reforms: Ruskin's 'Nature of Gothic,'" **The Nineteenth Century**, Vol. 67 (May, 1910), 922-30. When summarizing the scope of **Modern Painters, Seven Lamps,** and **Stones of Venice** Durrant referred to these treatises on art as Ruskin's "great art trilogy" (p. 925).

2. **The Political Economy of Art** was reissued with additions in 1880 as **"A Joy For Ever" and Its Price in the Market Place**. The second publication included three lectures given after 1857: (1) "Education in Art," a paper read at the Social Science Congress, 1858; (2) "Art School Notes," remarks addressed to the Mansfield Art Night Class, Oct. 14, 1873; (3) "Social Policy," a paper read before the Metaphysical Society, May 11, 1875. Throughout this chapter the original publication including the two lectures given at Manchester in 1857 and the Addenda of eight notes added in that year is referred to as **A Joy For Ever**.

3. Ruskin, **Aratra Pentelici. Six Lectures on the Elements of Sculpture** (1870); XX, 212; **A Joy For Ever**; XVI, 11.

4. Ruskin, **Seven Lamps**; VIII, 262. Also see E. T. Cook's "Introduction" to **Modern Painters**; IV, xxvii.

5. John D. Rosenberg, **The Genius of John Ruskin: Selections From His Writings** (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1964), p. 219

6. For a complete list of the lectures given during the last three years of the fifties see E. T. Cook's "Introduction" to Volume XVI of **The Works** edition, pp. xvii-xix. And for further evidence of Ruskin's early social directions see: **The Diaries of John Ruskin**, eds. Joan Evans and Howard Whitehouse, 3 vols. (Oxford: Univ. Pr., 1956), expecially the entries from 1845 to 1860; and **Arrows of the Chace**, 2 vols. of collected published letters on art and politics written from 1840 to 1880 (XXXIV), especially letters written during the late forties and the fifties.

7. Francis G. Townsend, in **Ruskin and the Landscape Feeling: A Critical Analysis of His Thought During the Crucial Years of His Life, 1843-56**, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, Vol. XXXV, No. 3 (Illinois: Univ. of Illinois Pr. Urbana, 1951), referred to Ruskin's

early theories about nature and its retributive powers as "the landscape feeling," explaining that

> Ruskin's central concern, even in his earliest work, was the betterment of humanity, and he hit upon an esthetic phenomenon of his age, the landscape feeling, as a means of moral improvement. His early work revolves around the analysis of the landscape feeling and its practical value in ever widening concentric circles. When he concluded that it was more an effect than a cause of social phenomena he abandoned esthetics and turned to economics.

This shift from "esthetics to economics" is not as complete as Townsend might suggest. Ruskin's romantic impulses, like his love for the works of Turner, are never totally abandoned; throughout his works his social thought is based on his early romantic theories about nature.

8. George Bernard Shaw was influenced by this position. See Shaw's study of Ruskin, **Ruskin's Politics**, The Ruskin Centenary Council, 1921 (Great Britain: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1921), and his plays, such as **Major Barbara** (1906).

9. The abilities to observe and understand nature and to draw her accurately are stressed throughout Ruskin's writings on art as essential qualities for any artist. Ruskin developed these abilities himself during his youth. As a child he spent his summers touring Scotland and England and in his teens toured Switzerland and Italy. His father encouraged him to keep notes on the things he saw; as early as age seven Ruskin made accurate accounts of natural conditions in his records. In his poems he indicated his interest in the accuracy of detailed observations (see "On Skiddaw and Derwent Water," a poem written when Ruskin was nine; II, 265).

10. See Appendix II: "Turner's Truth to Nature."

11. Robert Kimbrough, "Calm Between Crises: Pattern and Direction in Ruskin's Mature Thought," in **British Victorian Literature: Recent Revaluations**, ed. Shiv. K. Kumar (New York: Univ. Pr., 1969), p. 349.

12. Henry Ladd, **The Victorian Morality of Art: An Analysis of Ruskin's Aesthetic** (New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Pr., 1971), pp. 183-86.

13. Marcel Proust, "Within a Budding Grove," **Remembrance of Things Past**, trans. C. K. Scot Moncrieff, Vol. I (New York: Random House, 1934), 630-31.

14. See Appendix III: "Ideas of Invention and

Turner's **Pass of Faido.**"

15. David Sonstroem included an examination of this changed imagery in his analysis of the unity of purpose and image patterns in the third and fourth volumes of **Modern Painters.** See his article, "Prophet and Peripatetic in **Modern Painters** III and IV," in **Studies in Ruskin: Essays in Honor of Van Akin Burd,** eds. Robert Rhodes and Del Ivan Janik (Ohio: Ohio Univ. Pr., 1982), pp. 85-114.

16. E. T. Cook, **The Life of John Ruskin,** Vol. I (London: George Allen and Co., 1911), 31-32.

17. Ruskin, **The Elements of Drawing, in Three Letters to Beginners,** Letter III; XV, 186-88.

18. See Ruskin's lengthy analysis of this painting: **Modern Painters** V; VII, 389-408. Nick Shrimpton, in his article, "'Rust and Dust': Ruskin's Pivotal Work," in **New Approaches to Ruskin,** ed. Robert Hewison (1981), pp. 65-67, provided a brief but interesting discussion of the "dirt and dragon symbolism" used similarly by Ruskin and Dickens.

19. Discussion of and excerpts from Ruskin's "Diary of the Continental Tour of 1846" can be found in **Works;** V, xvii; and XXXV, 415.

20. When Ruskin referred to the Gothic Period he had a very precise time in mind. In **Stones of Venice** I, Chapter One, section 34, he explained that "the Gothic . . . extends in its purity from the middle of the thirteenth to the beginning of the fifteenth century" (IX, 43-44).

21. E. T. Cook, "Introduction" to **The Seven Lamps of Architecture;** VIII, xxvii.

22. For comparison see **Modern Painters** I; III, 137.

23. The title is borrowed from the opening line of John Keats' "Endymion: A Poetic Romance":

> A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

Recall Ruskin's amplification (see my note #3 above):

> the beauty which is indeed to be a joy for ever,
> must be a joy for all.

24. See **The Stones of Venice,** Volume Two; X, 214; and the summary of Ruskin's architectural teaching which is given in **Fors Clavigera,** Letter 78, "The Sword of Michael" (1877); XXIX, 138.

25. E. T. Cook, footnote to ch. vii, "The Lamp of Obedience," **Seven Lamps**; VIII, 261-62.

26. **Seven Lamps**, ch. vii; VIII, 249-50. Ruskin harshly criticized the notions of both liberty and equality in many other passages as well. See, for example, **Time and Tide**, Letter xxv; XVII, 455 ff., and Letter xxii; XVII, 431; **Fors Clavigera**, Letter 95 (1884); XXIX, 493-516; **Munera Pulveris**; XVII, 243; and **The Stones of Venice**, Vol. III, chapter iv; XI, 199-200.

27. E. T. Cook, footnote to ch. vii, **Seven Lamps**; VIII, 264.

28. E. T. Cook, footnote to chpt. vii, **Seven Lamps**; VIII, 264.

29. Townsend, **Ruskin and the Landscape Feeling**, p. 69. Townsend presented his analysis of the movement from **Seven Lamps** to **Stones of Venice** in Chapters Six and Seven, "**Stones of Venice** I: The Last Stand," and "**Stones of Venice** II and III: An End and a Beginning." These two chapters provide a coherent and complete summary of **The Stones of Venice**. Of the first volume of **Stones**, Townsend wrote that

> the first half of the book is sensible; the second half is foolish, because it purports to be esthetics and is actually sociology . . . . The section on construction is one of the most lucid and carefully planned expositions in English literature, but the section on decoration, although questionable on esthetic grounds is far superior on all others. (p. 54)

Though Townsend recognized the social bent of much of Volume One and the superb prose of the text, he underestimated Ruskin's awareness of and conscious choice in shifting the focus to social matters.

30. One explanation for Ruskin's choice of the date for the fall of Venice comes in an unusual analysis of Wilde's **Salome**. Delaura, in **Victorian Prose, A Guide to Research** (1973), summarized this analysis in the research section on Ruskin:

> Salome is Pater, all virginal sensuality, and Iokanaan is the prophetic John, all renunciation, while Herod is the atrium quid, Wilde himself, attracted to both. Ellmann's analysis of **The Stones of Venice** as concealed sexual drama is well worth reading. Why did Ruskin give an exact date for the fall of Venice, namely, 8 May 1418? He said it was the deathday of Carlo Zeno, but no other historian believes Zeno is that important. Ellman suggests--in his own words, at the risk of

> having his sanity questioned--that the date is exactly four hundred years before Ruskin's conception. Ruskin's fear of sensuality and his growing distaste for his gregarious wife emerge as the decline of Venice from spiritual idealism to Renaissance corruption. (p. 247)

31. Edith J. Morley, ed., **John Ruskin and Social Ethics**, Fabian Tract No. 179, Biographical Series, No. 6 (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1907), p. 7.

32. Robert Browning, "Andrea del Sarto (called 'The Faultless Painter')":

> Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's a heaven for? (ll. 97, 98)

33. Ruskin's recommendations for changes in the education system are evident in this passage. He advised the establishment of trade schools and suggested that people recognize their differences and admit their weaknesses as well as their strengths when choosing their life's work. For further discussions on his education policies see: **Stones** III, Appendix 7, "Modern Education"; XI, 258-62; **A Joy For Ever**, Addenda, Note 3rd, "Trial Schools"; XVI, 115-22; and **Unto This Last**, Preface; XVII, 21-22.

34. **A Joy For Ever**; XVI, 25. See the footnote following paragraph #16.

35. See Appendix I: "Ruskin's Position on Democracy."

36. See, for example: J. Howard Whitehouse, ed., **Ruskin the Prophet and Other Centenary Studies** (London: Allen and Unwin, 1920); A. M. P. Dawson, "A Victorian Prophet with a Message for To-Day," **Hibbert Journal**, 44-45 (1945-47), 253-57; and Peter Quennell, **John Ruskin: The Picture of a Prophet** (New York: Viking, 1949).

37. See Chapter Five, "The Influence of Ruskin's Social Thought."

38. In Lecture II, "Accumulation and Distribution," Ruskin advised that "there ought to be a great National Society instituted for the purchase of pictures; presenting them to the various galleries in our great cities, and watching over their safety" (XVII, 79). E. T. Cook included a footnote explaining that "Ruskin's suggestion was carried out in 1903 by the formation of a 'National Art Collections Fund'; the object of the Society being 'to raise money by private subscription and donation in order to supplement the support given by the State to

our national galleries and museums.'" R. H. Wilenski, too, mentioned that this and other of Ruskin's recommendations for the preservation of art were carried out. However, in his reference Wilenski included his irritating innuendoes about Ruskin's personal motives:

> It is important to note the advocacy in these lectures of national purchase and preservation of the art of the past. His conscience was uneasy about his own capture by the past and he was attempting rationalization in this way. Instead of hailing the Crystal Palace as a sign pointing to a new style in architecture he had advocated a Society for preserving old buildings. And now instead of urging a national Society for the purchase of contemporary art he calls for a Society for the purchase of old pictures. When he became unable to understand and react to contemporary creative architecture he became the pioneer of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments (destined to be founded in 1877); when he began to lose interest in contemporary creative painting he became the pioneer of the National Art-Collections Fund (destined to be founded in 1903).
> **(An Introduction to Further Study of His Life and Work** (1933), p. 284)

The important point to be taken from Wilenski's biographical subjectivity is that Ruskin's advice proved to be sound and was acted upon.

39. Ruskin referred to this passage again in **Time and Tide**; XVII, 463; and **Aratra Pentelici**; XX, 200.

40. Ruskin, **Giotto and His Works in Padua (1853-1860),** Notes on the Subjects, Note XXXVIII, "Descent of the Holy Spirit"; XXIV, 109-11. Cook included a footnote to this passage in which he explained that "the date of this work (or, at any rate, of its publication) is 1860; the note struck in it was to become dominant in Ruskin's later essays upon art" (XXIV, 109). See, for instance, **Lectures on Art**; XX, 107.

CHAPTER IV

The Mature Voice: The Political Economics of **Unto This Last, Munera Pulveris, and Time and Tide**

In his mature social thought, Ruskin developed the ideas about wealth introduced in the art trilogy and **A Joy For Ever**. During the decade after **A Joy For Ever**, he presented his definitions of wealth, value, cost, and utility, and his theories of national wealth, social justice, and social affection. He set his definition of "true wealth"--that which guarantees the physical, spiritual, and intellectual health and happiness of society--against the principles of classical economics, self-interest, and competition in his three major social texts, **Unto This Last** (1860), **Munera Pulveris** (1862-63), and **Time and Time** (1867). Together these works, which share a common economic premise based on Ruskin's humane vision of a co-operative social system, suggest a three-fold purpose in Ruskin's social thought:

> to overthrow the basis of the accepted doctrine (Unto This Last); to outline a scheme of Social Economy which should take its place (Munera Pulveris); and to show how its principles would work out in laws, customs, and institutions (Time and Tide).{1}

Throughout the eighteen-sixties Ruskin promulgated his social and economic views in lectures, essays, and letters in the country's major periodicals. **Unto This Last**, published with preface and title in 1862, first appeared as four essays in the **Cornhill Magazine** under the editorship of William Thackeray from August to November, 1860. **Munera Pulveris**, too, appeared as a series of essays during June, September, December, and April of 1862 and 1863 in **Fraser's Magazine**, edited by J. A. Froude. When published in book form in 1872, these four essays were subdivided to become the six chapters of **Munera Pulveris**. **Time and Tide**, a series of twenty-five letters which appeared in newspapers during the spring of 1867 was published in volume form later that year. In addition Ruskin published two other collections of essays, **Sesame and Lilies** (1865) and **The Crown of Wild Olive** (1866), and hundreds of letters in major newspapers during the decade to explicate and defend his social and economic ideas. In 1864 and 1865, for example, **The Times**, **The Daily Telegraph**, and **The Pall Mall Gazette** published his letters on topics such as "Work and Wages" and "The Law of Supply and Demand." The most important of these were published in Volume Two of **Arrows of the Chace**, a collection of Ruskin's "Letters on Politics, Economy, and Miscellaneous Matters."{2}

These years of correspondence with the newspapers were marked by criticism and attacks from many of Ruskin's reviewers and readers. The criticism was so hostile, in fact, that both Thackeray and Froude halted publication of

Ruskin's essays in **The Cornhill** and **Fraser's**. In his preface to **Munera Pulveris**, added to the essays for publication in 1872, Ruskin commented

> Eleven years ago, in the summer of 1860, perceiving then fully, (as Carlyle had done long before), what distress was about to come on the said populace of Europe through these errors of their teachers [in politics and economics], I began to do the best I might, to combat them, in the series of papers for the **Cornhill Magazine**, since published under the title of **Unto This Last**. The editor of the Magazine [Thackeray] was my friend, and ventured the insertion of the three first essays; but the outcry against them became too strong for any editor to endure, and he wrote me, with great discomfort to himself, and many apologies to me, that the Magazine must only admit one Economical Essay more.
>
> I made, with his permission, the last one longer than the rest, and gave it blunt conclusion as well as I could--and so the book now stands; but, as I had taken not a little pains with the Essays, and knew that they contained better work than most of my former writings, and more important truths than all of them put together, this violent reprobation of them by the **Cornhill** public set me still more gravely thinking; and, after turning the matter hither and thither in my mind for two years more, I resolved to make it the central work of my life to write an exhaustive treatise on Political Economy. It would not have been begun, at that time, however, had not the editor of **Fraser's Magazine** [J. A. Froude] written to me, saying that he believed there was something in my theories, and would risk the admission of what I chose to write on this dangerous subject; whereupon, cautiously, and at intervals, during the winter of 1862-63, I sent him, and he ventured to print, the preface of the intended work, divided into four chapters. Then, though the Editor had not wholly lost courage, the Publisher indignantly interfered; and the readers of **Fraser**, as those of **Cornhill**, were protected, for that time, from farther disturbance on my part. (XVII, 143)

In his social thought of the sixties, Ruskin undermined what were then accepted political beliefs and common economic attitudes.

Following the transcendental-evangelical line of Coleridge and Carlyle, in **Unto This Last, Munera Pulveris,** and **Time and Tide** Ruskin boldly presented arguments against accepted political-economic thought. He attacked the teachings of the classical economists, Adam Smith, Thomas R. Malthus, and David Ricardo, and of the orthodox economists, Jeremy Bentham and, later, Nassau William Senior (1790-1864), John Stuart Mill (1806-73), and Walter Bagehot (1826-77). In particular, he condemned the premises of Smith's **Wealth of Nations** (1776), Malthus' **Essay on the Principle of Population** (1789), and Ricardo's **Principle of Political Economy and Taxation** (1817). Ruskin contended that Smith's law of supply and demand and his belief that self-interest would guarantee proper price and wage control; that Malthus' equations against helping the poor; and that Ricardo's argments against higher wages together established the *laissez-faire* rationalizations which long blocked wage and employment regulations and prevented legislated social responsibility. And Ruskin argued against the related orthodox propositions that: the invention of new wants is always beneficial; demand for commodities is not a demand for labour; labour is a commodity to be bought and sold; wages should be determined by competition; and it is best to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market.

Ruskin's concepts of value and wealth directly oppose these propositions. He demanded consideration of human value and of the usefullness of material goods in determining true wealth, the "wealth well used" of **A Joy For Ever**. As R. H. Wilenski so concisely paraphrased:

> The Exchange Value of a cannon ball and a pudding may be the same, but the Real Intrinsic Value [Ruskin's terminology] is different because the second contributes to life and the first distributes death.
>
> To exclude Intrinsic Value from economic calculations is unscientific.
>
> To confuse it with Exchange Value, which is merely the market price at the moment, is absurd.{3}

Against propositions one and two Ruskin insisted that Political Economists have a duty to teach men to determine useful, life-giving objects, to know the difference between *Wealth* and *Illth*. Propositions three, four, and five support the popular orthodox positions of *laissez-faire*, unfettered competition, and the law of supply and demand. Ruskin understood the need for a system in which workmen can count on a fixed rate of pay regardless of the demand for labour and the amount of labour available. The link between manufacturer and labourer must be more than an economic one, he stressed. And, in **Unto This Last**, as in **The Stones of Venice**, he reminded his readers that production increases and improves with increased attention to humane interests:

> The largest quantity of work will not be done . . . for pay, or under pressure, or by help of any kind of fuel which may be supplied by the chaldron. It will be done only when the motive

> force, that is to say, the will or spirit of the worker, is brought to its greatest strength by its own proper fuel; namely, by the affections. (XVII, 29-30)

According to Ruskin, the fifth proposition most strongly propagated the injustice of the political-economic system he so severely criticized in **Unto This Last.**{4}

In addition to orthodox economic thought, Ruskin saw a threat to improving social conditions in the emergence of economics as a study separate from social science. Ruskin, in his support for a combined study of economics and social science, went against the economists of the day who were attempting to limit their subject in order to advance specialized research. The twentieth century, in its compartmentalization of areas of study, suggests that their efforts were successful. Though Ruskin was naive in his view that social, economic, and political studies must progress as one, he was correct in his observation that these areas of study must not be accepted as naturally separate. All areas of human development and thought overlap. The error of modern education is in forgetting that the divisions of thought into categories are prescribed and artificial. And, in part, the ready acceptance of specialized areas of thought has obscured the significance of Ruskin's works. Robert Hewison, in his "Afterword" to **New Approaches to Ruskin**, recognized this possibility:

> Ruskin's disrespect for categories makes him as hard to fit into a University course as it was to

> accommodate the first Slade Professor of Art . . . . Literary critics are faced with an imaginative writer who wrote no fiction other than a fairy tale, and his literary judgements are no more straightforward than his artistic ones. Analysis of his prose style for its own sake is only narrowly rewarding, and there is the daunting fact that Ruskin, to be read at all, must be read at length . . . . According to the categories he was neither philosopher, scientist, nor economist. Only the vague genre "cultural history," of which Ruskin was a pioneer, can accommodate all the facets of his work . . . .{5}

His "disrespect for categories," his constant recognition of relationships between areas of thought such as social reform and economic theory, and his attention to human development in all of his writings, set Ruskin against economics as a theoretical and separate study.

Nassau Senior, Walter Bagehot, and John Stuart Mill were at the forefront in redefining economics as separate from social science, called sociology or welfare economics in the twentieth century.{6} Explaining his methodology, Mill wrote that his study

> is concerned with [man] solely as a being who desires to possess wealth, and who is capable of judging of the comparative efficacy of means for obtaining that end. It predicts only such of the phenomena of the social state as takes place in consequence of the pursuit of wealth.{7}

Ruskin used his first essay of **Unto This Last**, "The Roots of Honour," as a response to Mill's view of man as "a being who desires to possess wealth." He compared the science of political economy, which assumes an economic man divorced from his affections, with a fictitious science of gymnastics which assumes that men have no skeletons (XVII, 26). Both, though theoretically interesting, prove invalid.

Willian Smart (1853-1915), Ruskin's first defender in the field of political economy, incorrectly assumed that "Ruskin did not object to Political Economy [as a separate study], so long as it was confessed **Mercantile Economy.**"{8} Ruskin, though, indicated again and again that by the very act of studying economics for mercantile purposes, society suffers. On Smart's defense, **A Disciple of Plato: A Critical Study of John Ruskin** (1883), Ruskin commented:

> I would like to add that, while I admit there is such a thing as mercantile economy, distinguished from social, I have always said that neither Mill, Fawcett, not Bastiat knew the contemptible science they professed to teach.{9}

Against the mercantile view, the separation of economics from social welfare, his own definition is inextricably bound to his humanism. The first two sentences of **Munera Pulveris** read:

> As domestic economy regulates the arts and habits of a household, Political Economy regulates those of a society or State, with reference to the means of its maintenance.
>
> Political economy is neither an art nor a science; but a system of conduct and legislature, founded on the sciences, directing the arts, and impossible, except under certain conditions of moral culture. (XVII, 147){10}

Those "conditions of moral culture" invoke his earlier calls for responsibility to one's fellow man, a responsibility at the heart of all social welfare. Ruskin, though not an economist himself, argued against a study that ingores the social repercussions of economic decisions and the needs of the masses.

Ruskin's ardent desire to point out the fallacies inherent in an economic and political system built on the principles of classical economics and *laissez-faire* rationalizations led him into fallacies and errors of his own. For Ruskin's purposes, the writings of Ricardo, Smith, Malthus, and, most specifically, Mill are representative of the uncaring and irresponsible social, economic, and political thought which, in the nineteenth century, prevented social improvement. Unfairly, he overlooked their contributions to social and economic thought, and at times, he misunderstood or misread their arguments. Always ready to point out the differences between his and Mill's economic thought, and to call those differences Mill's errors, Ruskin failed to admit similarities between their ideas. John T. Fain rightly criticized Ruskin's blindness to Mill's strengths as a political economist, questioning Ruskin's general attitude toward him. "There is some evidence," wrote Fain, "to show that Ruskin found what he wanted to find in Mill's **Principles**. When he finds himself in total disagreement with Mill . . . he ridicules Mill without reserve. When he finds himself in partial agreement, he still ridicules and attempts to show that Mill does not understand the purport of his own statements."{11} Ruskin's invalid criticism of Mill has long been recognized. As early as

1879, Peter Bayne, in **Lessons from My Masters, Carlyle, Tennyson, and Ruskin,** accused Ruskin of misrepresenting both Mill and Smith; however, Bayne excused him explaining that he

> looks upon them simply as apostles of competition, that he regards competition as the subversion of justice and of Christianity, and, further, that he traces to them and their teaching that destruction of works and scenes of beauty which has been to him an agony for more than forty years.{12}

Further, Ruskin's redefinition of terms such as "wealth" and "value" make many of his arguments against the conventional economic usage confusing and, at times, invalid. When criticizing Mill's and Ricardo's concepts of value, for example, Ruskin ignored the terminological distinctions between their writings and his own (**Unto This Last**; XVII, 79-80). John T. Fain pointed out that Ruskin used examples from Ricardo's **Principles** to illustrate his own labour theory of value by falsifying Ricardo's position; and that he skipped pages of discussion when quoting Ricardo and Mill, which in several instances unfairly changed the context of their ideas.{13}

Beyond the excuse of overzealous criticism of orthodox economists, some of Ruskin's ideas must be recognized as simply faulty. In his attempt to assess the basis of political-economic thought in **Unto This Last** and **Munera Pulveris** he came to several illogical conclusions, and in describing his vision of a commonwealth in **Time and Tide** he made some suggestions that are irrational and some that are utopian. The most notable fallacies are his ideas about free trade as it relates to competition, and his criticisms of interest.

In **Unto This Last** Ruskin explained that free trade is vital for a "World Political Economy" because it allows nations to exchange products without destructive competition (XVII, 72). There is something quite illogical about Ruskin's explanations, however. His conclusion that "competition, indeed, arises first, and sharply, in order to prove which is strongest in any given manufacture possible to both; [and that] once [this strength is] ascertained, competition is at an end," works against his teachings about co-operation and competition and is not logically developed. According to John T. Fain's succinct analysis, Ruskin's position on free trade is "entirely contradictory," supported by "some of the loosest reasoning in his works."{14}

Ruskin's criticisms of interest, too, have proven to be illogical. By the time he wrote **Fors Clavigera** he took an extreme stand against all interest, calling it illegitimate.{15} In introductory comments to Volume Seventeen, E. T. Cook explained that these ideas

> are generally accounted fallacies, even by those most sympathetic in other respects to his economic standpoint, and the prominence which these ideas assumed in his later writings probably did much to prevent or delay political economists from recognizing the validity of his other criticisms. (XVII, xcvii)

J. A. Hobson, one of the strongest supporters of Ruskin's social and economic thought, agreed that the ideas about interest indicate a "serious error in his economic reasoning." However, Hobson took much time to explain where Ruskin's error starts and he showed the error to be part of "a famous fallacy which has in the history of economic thought proved fatal to many of the subtlest intellects the world has ever known." Hobson also noted that

> The Ruskin of "Fors" had in fact abandoned the far sounder position of "Munera Pulveris," which condemned only exorbitant interest due to oppressions as one among various modes of oppressive dealing.(16)

Notwithstanding these fallacies, Ruskin's position represents a sound criticism of the popular political-economic philosophy that turned its back on social responsibility. His attacks on the *laissez-faire* rationalizations, the philosophy of self-interest, and the development of a separate economic science are always based on humanitarian concern, Christian morality, and a desire for social improvement. In place of a political-economic system stressing self-interest and competition, Ruskin argued for one which would include social affection. He opened the first essay of **Unto This Last** with a facetious paraphrase of the orthodox economists' view of social affection:

> "The social affections," says the economist, "are accidental and disturbing elements in human nature; but avarice and the desire of progress are constant elements. Let us eliminate the inconstants, and, considering the human being

> merely as a covetous machine, examine by what laws of labour, purchase, and sale, the greatest accumulative result in wealth is obtainable." (XVII, 25)

Ruskin's argument, which gained ground at the end of the nineteenth century and was accepted in the twentieth, states that man's motive force, his affections (which, Ruskin would add, are inextricably bound to his soul) cannot be eliminated when forming economic opinions, decisions, and attitudes. Frederic Harrison compared Ruskin's and Auguste Comte's belief that political economics is inextricably bound to the social affections:

> Comte's argument was, that "a separate economic science is, strictly speaking, an impossibility, as representing only one portion of a complex organism" . . . . Ruskin rushed at the problem wholly from the mediaeval, sentimental, and social point of view; but he grasped the root of the matter keenly, and argued it with glowing style.{17}

After reading an advance copy of **Unto This Last**, Thomas Carlyle, agreeing with Ruskin against the orthodox position, sent him the following letter of praise:

> Chelsea, October 29, 1860
> Dear Ruskin,-- You go down through those unfortunate dismal-science people like a treble-X of Senna, Glauber, and Aloes; like a fit of British cholera, threatening to be fatal! I have read your paper with exhilaration, exultation, often with laughter, with bravissimo! Such a thing flung suddenly into half a million dull British heads on the same day, will do a great deal of good. I marvel in parts at the lynx-eyed sharpness of your logic . . . . My joy is great to find myself henceforth in a minority of two, at any rate. The Dismal-Science people will object that their science expressly abstracts itself from moralities, from etc., etc.,; but what you say and show is incontrovertibly true--that no 'science', worthy of men (and not

> worthier of dogs or of devils), has a right to call itself 'political economy', or can exist at all, except mainly as a fetid nuisance and a public poison, on other terms than those you shadow out to it for the first time . . . . Go on and prosper.
>
> I am yours always (sleeping a little better, and hoping an evening soon),
>
> T. Carlyle.{18}

In 1860 the four essays together with the preface of **Unto This Last** formally introduced Ruskin's political-economic teaching, his challenge to the accepted science. In each paper, he pitted the faults and fallacies of the orthodox position against the strengths and logic of his own. He emphasized a doctrine of Social Affection to support all of his claims against "the dismal-science people." The object of the essays, he explained in the preface, is to define wealth accurately and to promote honesty as the only means for attaining it. He also outlined four social policies which form part of his social plan: government schools for all; government manufactories and workshops to set standards of production; protection against unemployment; and protection for the aged in the form of housing and pensions. In "The Roots of Honour," Ruskin, reacting against John Stuart Mill's premise, objected to a Science of Political Economics which creates an "economic man" free of all human feeling. Illustrating the inability of an abstract science to deal with the facts of production and labour, he argued that only social affection, a human concern for all members of society, can guarantee the regulation of wages and a fixity of employment, the promotion of good working conditions, and the production of well-crafted, useful goods. In "The Veins of Wealth" he opposed the mercantile definitions of riches with his own definitions of wealth. Restating the premises of **The Seven Lamps of Architecture** Ruskin concluded that true wealth consists of healthy souls and bodies. In "Qui Judicatis Terram" Ruskin, in addition to reinforcing some key ideas from the first essay, applied the "Rule of Justice" to commercial dealings and to the payment of labour. Injustice, he asserted, is the direct result of the law of supply and demand which causes underpayment and overpayment in the marketplace. In the final essay, "Ad Valorem," he combined a last attack on the orthodox position of Ricardo and Mill with an explication of his concepts of value, wealth, illth, price, and production. The climax of the essay, which is also a most concise summary of his arguments in political economics, succinctly states: "THERE IS NO WEALTH BUT LIFE" (XVII, 105). Throughout **Unto This Last**, this equation between wealth and life demands social improvements--improved living and working conditions--and a changed social attitude--one that is responsible and caring.

In the first essay, "The Roots of Honour," Ruskin posed his argument for social affection between employer and employed (also referred to as master and labourer, master and operative, manufacturer and workman, and merchant and workman), and expanded it into a discussion of the responsibilities of the employer and of the social rôle of the manufacturer. He noted this relationship between employer and employee in his allusion to the builders' strike of 1859, calling the modern political-economic theory inapplicable in "the present phase of the world." He added that the late strikes of the workmen had indicated "the first vital problem which political economy has to deal with (the relation between employer and employed)" (XVII, 27). Through an examination of this relationship Ruskin criticized the economic premise that man's primary motivation comes from self-interest and the *laissez-faire* views of supply and demand. He also illustrated the active role that the social affections must have in a valid study of political economy.

Ruskin claimed that justice rather than expediency, and affection rather than antagonism are the basis of the best relationships between people, including those between employers and employees. Before shifting the focus of "The Roots of Honour" to "the more complicated relations existing between a manufacturer and his workmen" (XVII, 32), however, he supported his claim with two illustrations of relationships, one between householder and domestic servant, and the other between a commander and his men. In both Ruskin began by speculating on the results to a relationship of the premises of the accepted political-economic view. Then he presented a view of a relationship based on his premise, man's affections--the concern and responsibility men feel for one another. In the first illustration he wrote:

> We will suppose that the master of a household desires only to get as much work out of his servants as he can, at the rate of wages he gives. He never allows them to be idle; feeds them as poorly and lodges them as ill as they will endure.
>
> This is the politico-economical view of the case, according to the doctors of that science; who assert that by this procedure the greatest average of work will be obtained from the servant, and therefore the greatest benefit to the community, and through the community, by reversion, to the servant himself.
>
> That, however, is not so. It would be so if the servant were an engine of which the motive power was steam, magnetism, gravitation, or any other agent of calculable force. But he being, on the contrary, an engine whose motive power is a Soul, the force of this very peculiar agent, as an unknown quantity, enters into all the political economist's equations, without his knowledge, and falsifies every one of their [sic] results. (XVII, 29)

The "greatest material result" and the greatest "good of all kinds [sic]" are obtainable not through antagonism between servants and householder, but through regard for each other.

Ruskin anticipated attitudes of the next century, when he suggested that affectionate and unselfish treatment toward immoral as well as moral people produces the best possible result, "for the servant who, gently treated, is ungrateful, treated ungently, will be revengeful; and the man who is dishonest to a liberal master will be injurious to an unjust one" (XVII, 30). He asked his readers to examine the relationship between Esther and Charlie in Dickens' **Bleak House** and to recall Dickens' Mr. Bounderby and Stephen Blackpool in **Hard Times** for further evidence of the different results produced by antagonism and concern.{19} In Ruskin's second illustration, the relationship between a commander and his men, Ruskin wrote that

> assuredly the officer who has the most direct personal relations with his men, the most care for their interests, and the most value for their lives, will develop their effective strength, through their affection for his own person, and trust in his character, to a degree wholly unattainable by other means. (XVII, 32)

In both of these relationships--between householder and servant and commander and his men--as in the reference to Charles Dickens' novels, Ruskin indicated his radical vision of industrial relations based on social affection. Ruskin developed the second illustration in more detail to reveal the faults of the accepted political-economic doctrines; the orthodox doctrines, argued Ruskin, encourage antagonistic competition and selfishness in employers, which in turn leads to indifference to both workers and quality in production.

Ruskin compared this "commander to men" relationship with that between employer and employee in two further references. In the first he contrasted the bond possible between soldiers and their colonel with the apparent impossiblity of a comparable relation "among cotton-spinners for the proprietor of the mill." The difference, Ruskin explained, involves social and economic responsibility, "for a servant or a soldier is engaged at a definite rate of wages, for a definite period; but a workman at a rate of wages variable according to the demand for labour, and with the risk of being at any time thrown out of his situation by chances of trade" (XVII, 33). Repeating the contrast between the relationships experienced by soldiers and workmen, in the second reference Ruskin noted that an officer is presumed to act in the spirit of self-sacrifice while a manufacturer is presumed to act out of self-interest.

The final sections of "The Roots of Honour" are structured around this contrast between the selfish character and role of the manufacturer as assumed by the teaching of the orthodox political economists, and the responsible manufacturer Ruskin's own teachings assume. A description of the manufacturer/merchant appears twice in discussions of what Ruskin called the country's "five great intellectual professions, relating to daily necessities of life" (XVII, 39)--soldiers, clergymen, doctors, lawyers, and merchants.{20} Though Ruskin defined these five professions--the Soldier's profession to defend; the Pastor's to teach; the Physician's to maintain health; the Lawyer's to enforce justice; and the Merchant's to provide--he stressed that only the pastor's, the physician's, and the merchant's are essential.{21} In one discussion he investigated the lack of respect accorded the manufacturer as a professional, and in the other clarified his true function. Ruskin argued that the orthodox economists' taint of "self-interest" in the merchant denies respect to all the professions concerned with trade and commerce. The other professions gain respect because they are perceived as unselfish and serviceable. Ruskin put partial blame for the selfishness of the merchant on public opinion which endorses the political-economic belief in self-interest as the primary motivator in trade and commerce. In the section on respect he concluded that though it is right to condemn the selfishness of merchants, it is wrong to assume that selfishness is natural to commerce. Once the public recognizes that commerce is not exclusively selfish they will

> find that commerce is an occupation which gentlemen will every day see more need to engage in, rather than in the businesses of talking to men [the clergy], or slaying them [the military]; that, in true commerce, as in true preaching, or true fighting, it is necessary to admit the idea of occasional voluntary loss;--that sixpences have to be lost, as well as lives, under a sense of duty; that the market may have its martyrdoms as well as the pulpit; and trade its heroisms as well as war. May have--in the final issue, must have--and only has not had yet, because men of heroic temper have always been misguided in their youth into other fields; not recognizing what is in our days, perhaps, the most important of all fields; so that, while many a zealous person loses his life in trying to teach the form of a gospel, very few will lose a hundred pounds in showing the practice of one. (XVII, 39)

The merchant's true function is to provide for the nation in a spirit of responsibility and unselfishness. "And as a captain of a ship is bound to be the last man to leave his ship in the case of wreck . . . so the manufacturer, in any commercial crisis or distress, is bound to take the suffering of it with his men . . ." (XVII, 42).

Ruskin concluded the essay by asserting that the manufacturer's function is not to make a profit for himself, just as the clergyman's is not to collect his stipend or the doctor's to collect his fee. Rephrasing the ideas of **Stones of Venice** Ruskin explained: "it becomes [the manufacturer's] duty, not only to be always considering how to produce what he sells, in the purest and cheapest forms, but how to make the various employments involved in the production, or transference of it, most beneficial to the men employed" (XVII, 41). In this conclusion Ruskin echoed his comments on paternal authority and responsibility first made in the aesthetic works of the fifties. Since a manufacturer's decisions affect such large numbers, his responsibility embraces the kind of life his workers lead. As a practical rule, Ruskin suggested that manufacturers treat their workers as they would their own sons. And in addition to his responsibility to quality of work, the true function of the manufacturer in providing for the nation carries with it a responsibility for quality of product. The manufacturer must ensure "perfectness and purity" in the products, even to giving up profit before allowing quality to fall. The deterioration and adulteration of goods meets with Ruskin's harsh criticism in the letters of **Time and Tide** (for example, Letter XIV; XVII, 383-87).

Ruskin's most practical demand in this first essay is for job security and wage regulations. His suggestions that "the rate of wages [be] so regulated as not to vary with the demand for labour" (XVII, 33) and that "constant numbers of workmen [be maintained] in employment, whatever may be the accidental demand for the article they produce," directly opposes the economic position of supply and demand (XVII, 35). In defense of fixed wages, Ruskin argued that "the best labour always has been, and is, as all labour ought to be, paid by an invariable standard" (XVII, 34). To underline that wage regulation already existed he wrote that

> Perhaps one of the most curious facts in the history of human error is the denial by the common political economist of the possibility of thus regulating wages; while, for all the important, and much of the unimportant, labour, on the earth, wages are already so regulated [a reference to government employees, the clergy, doctors, lawyers, and military men]. (XVII, 33)

John T. Fain, in **Ruskin and the Economists**, indicated that in fact John Stuart Mill said much the same thing about the regulation of wages in his **Principles**. Though Ruskin did not specifically mention Mill in this passage he did refer to "the common political economist," a catch-all category to which Mill usually belonged in Ruskin's attacks.{22}

In particular, Ruskin argued the need for regulation of factory wages. Lack of regulation not only induces insecurities into the lives of workmen but enables bad workers to offer to work for lower wages and force good workers to work for unfair wages. In short it depresses the labour market. Workers must be able to count on earning enough money to support themselves and their families. On this point, once again Ruskin foreshadowed some labour issues of our own century. About seasonal work he wrote that "the wages which enable any workman to live are necessarily higher, if his work is liable to intermission, than if it is assured and continuous" (XVII, 35). John T. Fain, in assessing Ruskin's views of the unregulated, insecure relationship between worker and employer, concluded that his view,

> though exaggerated, contains enough truth to give it a sting as an indictment of contemporary industrial practice. [Ruskin] is saying that hours are based on what the workman can stand, that wages are set by supply and demand rather than by the requirements of decent food and housing, that freedom of contract conduces to oppressive and irresponsible conduct on the part of the employer. There is justice in this indictment, although it takes no account of certain protective legislation, some of which was sponsored by the political economists themselves.{23}

However, Ruskin's purpose in these essays was to show the fallacies of accepted doctrines, and to advance his own ideas for improvements in areas he believed were the responsibility of the political economist, or of the politician, or, as in this first paper, of the manufacturer/employer. His discussions of job security and wage regulation indicate some ways in which a manufacturer can improve the kind of life led by his workers. Though Ruskin conceded at the end of this essay that his ideas and advice would sound strange to the adherents of the accepted political-economic doctrines, he warned his readers to heed his advice:

> All the life which we now possess as a nation shows itself in the resolute denial and scorn, by a few strong minds and faithful hearts, of the economic principles taught to our multitudes, which principles, so far as accepted lead straight to national destruction. (XVII, 42)

In the second essay of **Unto This Last**, "The Veins of Wealth," Ruskin aligned himself with "Political Economy" while aligning the accepted economists with "Mercantile Economy." His criticism of the orthodox concepts of wealth and theories for acquiring riches indicate that conventional economics are concerned with "merces" or material possessions. His explanations of the relativity of words like "wealth" and "riches," and his analysis of economic inequalities indicate that his own economics are concerned with the "Polis," the State and its citizens. He organized this second paper around the contrasting definitions of Political and Mercantile Economics:

> I wish the reader clearly and deeply to understand the difference between the two economies, to which the terms "Political" and "Mercantile" might not unadvisedly be attached. Political economy (the economy of a State, or of citizens) consists simply in the production, preservation, and distribution, at fittest time and place, of useful or pleasurable

> things . . . . All political economists in the true and final sense [add] continually to the riches and well-being of the nation to which they belong. But mercantile economy, the economy of "merces" or of "pay" signifies the accumulation, in the hands of individuals, of legal or moral claim upon, or power over, the labour of others; every such claim implying precisely as much poverty or debt on one side, as it implies riches or right on the other.
>
> It does not, therefore, necessarily involve an addition to the actual property, or well-being of the State in which it exists. (XVII, 44-45)

Ruskin had already discussed both definitions in **A Joy For Ever**.

The mercantile or orthodox political economists, Ruskin asserted, practiced "simply the science of getting rich" (XVII, 43). In essay three, "Qui Judicatis Terram," Ruskin referred back to this passage in a facetious description of orthodox political economics as "the science of getting rich." But he went on to explain that

> there are many sciences, as well as many arts, of getting rich. Poisoning people of large estates, was one employed largely in the Middle Ages; adulteration of food of people of small estates, is one employed largely now. The ancient and honourable Highland method of black mail; the more modern and less honourable system of obtaining goods on credit, and the other variously improved methods of appropriation--which, in major and minor scales of industry, down to the most artistic pocket-picking, we owe to recent genius,--all come under the general head of sciences, or arts, of getting rich.
>
> So that it is clear the popular economist, in calling his science the science par excellence of getting rich, must attach some peculiar ideas of limitation to its character. I hope I do not misrepresent him, by assuming that he means his science to be the science of "getting rich by legal or just means." (XVII, 61-62)

Following this assumption, Ruskin concluded that the popular economist must pay attention to Ruskinian political ideas in order to find a just method of getting rich. He pursued this line of reasoning in the third essay of **Unto This Last**.

Though the orthodox political economists had shown many individuals how to get rich, they had ignored the social and moral implications of becoming rich. "Rich" is a relative word which implies its opposite, "poor"; "the art of making yourself rich, in the ordinary mercantile economist's sense, is therefore equally and necessarily the art of keeping your neighbour poor" (XVII, 44). He illustrated this point by the example of a man who owns a large estate, much farm land, herds of cattle, storehouses of foods, and great mounds of gold. If none of his neighbours are poor or in need of his food or in want of his gold he will be unable to hire any of them as his servants. Ruskin concluded that

> He must, therefore, bake his own bread, make his own clothes, plough his own ground, and shepherd his own flocks. His gold will be as useful to him as any other yellow pebbles on his estate. His stores must rot, for he cannot consume them. He can eat no more than another man could eat and wear no more than another man could wear. He must lead a life of severe and common labour to procure even ordinary comforts . . . .
>
> What is really desired, under the name of riches is, essentially, power over men; in its simplest sense, the power of obtaining for our own advantage the labour of servant, tradesman, and artist; in wider sense, authority of directing large masses of the nation to various ends (good, trivial, or hurtful, according to the mind of the rich person). And this power of wealth of course is greater or less in direct proportion to the poverty of the men over whom it

> is exercised . . . . So that, as above stated, the art of becoming "rich", in the common sense, is not absolutely nor finally the art of accumulating much money for ourselves, but also of contriving that our neighbours shall have less. In accurate terms, it is "the art of establishing the maximum inequality in our own favour." (XVII, 45-46)

With this passage Ruskin not only illustrated his claim that a mercantile understanding of riches is relative to the degree of existing poverty, but he also underlined his earlier view that the essence of wealth consists in its authority over men.

This point, maintained in this essay and resumed in **Munera Pulveris**, is expanded in two further illustrations. Ruskin used the motif of men on a deserted island in these two illustrations to show how the "inequality of possession may be established between different persons, giving rise to the Mercantile forms of Riches and Poverty" (XVII, 46).

In the first illustration two sailors stranded on an uninhabited coast begin their life co-operatively cultivating the land and storing and sharing their produce. However, due to sickness one of the men incurs a debt, becomes dependent on the other, and ends up owing labour and goods. Ruskin asked,

> What will the positions of the two men be when the invalid is able to resume work?
>
> Considered as a "polis", or state, they will be poorer than they would have been otherwise: poorer by the withdrawal of what the sick man's labour would have produced in the interval . . . . The united property of the two men will be certainly less than it would have been if both

> had remained in health and activity.
>
> . . . .
>
> The establishment of the mercantile wealth which consists in a claim upon labour, signifies a political diminution of the real wealth which consists in substantial possessions. (XVII, 49-51)

In the second illustration, three men form an isolated Republic; each, in the beginning, farms a piece of land and each produces a distinct kind of foodstuff. After a while the work is redivided to save time, one man undertaking the transfer of commodities from one farm to the other in return for a share of the goods he conveys. Ruskin explained how the "middle man" following the laws of "political" economy (co-operation, just and honest dealing) contributes "the largest possible result in produce, or wealth," to the community. However, he went on to show how, according to the laws of the "mercantile" economist (for example, buy cheap and sell dear), the middle man might benefit himself at the cost of lessening their aggregate wealth. Ruskin explained

> But suppose no intercourse between the landowners is possible, except through the travelling agent; and that, after a time, this agent, watching the course of each man's agriculture, keeps back the articles with which he has been entrusted until there comes a period of extreme necessity for them, on one side or other, and then exacts in exchange for them all that the distressed farmer can spare of other kinds of produce: it is easy to see that by ingeniously watching his opportunities, he might possess himself regularly of the greater part of the superfluous produce of the two estates, and at last, in some year of severest trial or scarcity, purchase both for himself and maintain the former proprietors thence forward as his labourers or servants. This would be a case of commercial wealth

> acquired on the exactest principles of modern political economy. (XVII, 51-52)

Though Ruskin may seem to generalize about all merchants, he was here as elsewhere in his social writings warning readers of the kind of behaviour that could be rationalized under the, by then, accepted political and economic doctrines. Ruskin's main argument in these illustrations is that mercantile wealth, which consists in a claim upon labour and is produced by establishing inequalities between men, falls far short of the real wealth that can be produced by following principles of economy based on co-operation, honest dealing, and justice.

Ruskin identified the mercantile assumption that "wealth" means riches accumulated by an individual as the basic major fallacy in the accepted economic thought, explaining that "the rash and absurd assumption that . . . inequalities are necessarily advantageous, lies at the root of most of the popular fallacies on the subject of political economy" (XVII, 46-47). He argued that a second fallacy arises from the conclusion that any accumulation of material wealth represents a good to the nation. He explained that what seems to be wealth might, in fact, cause more destruction and cost more in production than its actual worth; once again he revealed his intense concern for working conditions, methods of production, and the social effects of economic decisions:

> Any given accumulation of commercial wealth may be indicative, on the one hand, of faithful industries, progressive energies, and productive ingenuities: or on the other, it may be indicative of mortal luxury, merciless tyranny, ruinous chicane. (XVII,52)

To make sure his readers had not misunderstood the kinds of costs that must be taken into account, he explicated further:

> One mass of money is the outcome of action which has created,--another, of action which has annihilated,--ten times as much in the gathering of it; such and such strong hands have been paralyzed, as if they had been numbed by nightshade: so many strong men's courage broken, so many productive operations hindered; this and the other false direction given to labour . . . . That which seems to be wealth may in verity be only the gilded index of far-reaching ruin . . . . (XVII, 53)

This discussion repeats the warnings already sounded in **The Stones of Venice** and **A Joy For Ever**. An economic perspective that ignores social and moral questions and costs cannot increase the real wealth of a country.

The myopic view of the orthodox position led Ruskin to condemn yet another of its principles:

> So far as I know, there is not in history record of anything so disgraceful to the human intellect as the modern idea that the commercial text, "Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest," represents, or under any circumstances could represent, an available principle of national economy. (XVII, 53)

This principle epitomizes all that Ruskin had been criticizing in this second essay. He blamed its rationalizations for promoting individual as opposed to "political" wealth and encouraging inequalities of wealth to benefit only a few members of society. By such popular and accepted economic propositions Ruskin was goaded into vehement criticisms of nineteenth-century political economy.

Ruskin's political economy as opposed to the mercantile economy he criticized defines real wealth as existing in happy and healthy human beings. The title of this second paper, "The Veins of Wealth," provides the central image for the essay. The "mercantile economist" understands the veins of wealth to be those found in rock, the tangible riches of possessions measured by their value in gold. Ruskin judged such a measurement as barbaric at best. The "political economist," on the other hand, has

> discovered that the true veins of wealth are purple--and not in Rock, but in Flesh--perhaps even that the final outcome and consummation of all wealth is in producing as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human creatures. (XVII, 55-56)

As noted earlier, this emphasis on real wealth which Ruskin continued in the next two essays, forms the climax of **Unto This Last** with the conclusion that "THERE IS NO WEALTH BUT LIFE" (Essay IV; 104).

In the third essay, "Qui Judicatis Terram," however, Ruskin left this explication of real wealth in order to pursue "the great question of justice " in political-economic policy. The title of the third essay alludes to Dante's **Paradiso** (xviii) in which the Souls in heaven trace the words "Diligite Justitiam Qui Judicatis

Terram": "Ye who judge the earth give diligent love to justice." The words which the souls trace in heaven come from the Wisdom of Solomon (i.1). The laws of justice form "that principle of distinction between well-gotten and ill-gotten wealth," (XVII, 57) a distinction first discussed in **A Joy For Ever**. Contrasting his own with the orthodox ideas, Ruskin linked political economics with just laws and mercantile with unjust laws. As his readers might expect, co-operation, distribution, and responsibility are all principles of the first group of laws; competition, supply and demand, and self-interest belong to the second.

As was his method in the earlier papers, Ruskin supported his own position with a Biblical text and in the same text found arguments against the orthodox position. Not only in the essays of **Unto This Last**, but in all of his writings--aesthetic as well as social--Ruskin alluded to and borrowed analogies and quotations from the Bible. He supported his major arguments with Biblical themes; he based his economics on the Biblical concepts of co-operation, self-sacrifice, justice, and service. This use of the Bible as a primary source material for his writings is not surprising in view of his time given to reading and memorizing it with his mother during the early years of his life, time he considered "the most precious, and, on the whole, the one **essential** part of all [his] education" (**Praeterita**; XXXV, 42-43). Ruskin alluded to the Bible throughout **Unto This Last** (the title itself comes from the parable of the Vineyard Workers, Matthew xx. 13), as in his other social and economic writings, to show that his conclusions were supported by Christian teachings. He expressed his disappointment with the reception given **Unto This Last**, especially by the clergy, in a letter to his father dated November 5, 1861:

> I fully intend finishing Political Economy, but otherwise than as I began it. I have first to read Xenophon's **Economist** and Plato's **Republic** carefully, and to master the economy of Athens. I could not now write in the emotional way I did then [in **Unto This Last**]. I am so disquieted by none of the clergymen coming forward to help me anywhere that I shall quote no more Bible for them. I am not going to cast more pearls before swine. I will do the work sternly and unanswerably, in shortest possible language. (XVII, xlix-l)

Though Ruskin borrowed from the Bible to support his views, his logic and his observations of nineteenth-century England, led to those views.

There are numerous Biblical references in "Qui Judicatis Terram," many of them from Proverbs or the Psalms. Understandably, these are allusions to justice and to conflicts between rich and poor. Ruskin contrasted the teachings of Solomon, "a Jew merchant, largely engaged in business on the Gold Coast, and reported to have made one of the largest fortunes of his time (held also in repute for much practical sagacity)" (XVII, 57) with those of modern political economists. Though Solomon's teachings were highly respected in his own day and have survived till the present, explained Ruskin, "of late years these writings have fallen into disrepute, being opposed in every particular to the spirit of modern commerce" (XVII, 57). As Ruskin argued, his own view of commerce wholly supports Solomon's.

A pattern of comparison between Solomon and the "mercantile" economists is repeated throughout the first three sections. Ruskin quoted Solomon, discussed the passage, and presented the opposing mercantile view. For each passage he reiterated the plea for the "true veins of wealth," for the improvement of life, and for the production of invisible wealth in the souls and minds of men. The first maxim leads logically into the topic of this essay, just and unjust approaches to commerce: Solomon wrote that "the getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death," that "treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but justice delivers from death" (XVII, 57-58). In his explanation that

> if we read, instead of "lying tongue," "lying label, title, pretence, or advertisement," we shall more clearly perceive the bearing of the words on modern business, (XVII, 58)

Ruskin foreshadowed twentieth-century condemnations of false advertising. Any unjust scheme of wealth, according to Ruskin and based upon Solomon, ultimately produces death. Such death encompasses not only the spiritual death of man's soul, feelings, and thoughts, but the various kinds of social deaths that Ruskin observed and predicted again and again in his social writings.

Other texts borrowed from Solomon involve the relationships between poor and rich already introduced in the first two essays. Ruskin quoted Solomon's warnings against oppressing the poor and his Biblical advice which suggested co-operation between poor and rich; he then related the warnings and advice to the "mercantile" position:

> The merchant says, "He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, shall surely come to want." And again, more strongly: "Rob not the poor because he is poor . . . ."
>
> This "robbing the poor because he is poor," is especially the mercantile form of theft, consisting in taking advantage of a man's necessities in order to obtain his labour or property at a reduced price. (XVII, 58)

Here the reader, reminded of the arguments given in "The Veins of Wealth," should recall that the illustration involving three men who form an isolated republic expressed the same condemnations as this passage from Solomon. The final Biblical passage quoted in this section of the essay prepares the way for Ruskin's defense of justice as the guiding principle for economic and social relationships between the rich and the poor: "The rich and the poor have met. God is their light" (XVII, 59). Though it is inevitable that rich and poor coexist, the way that they treat each other and work together depends on their knowing that "God is their light." As Ruskin explained later, he was arguing for the inclusion of divine law in society's economic and social laws (XVII, 62). Whether or not Ruskin himself was a Christian--and his later writings suggest that he was not--he was able to find support for his own ideas of economic co-operation and social responsibility in the pages of the Bible, the teachings of which were the assumed basic religious precepts of his own period. As he wrote at the close of this essay:

> I said in my last paper that nothing in history had ever been so disgraceful to human intellect as the acceptance among us of the common doctrines of political economy as a science. I have many grounds for saying this, but one of the chief may be given in few words. I know no previous instance in history of a nation's establishing a systematic disobedience to the first principles of its professed religion. The writings which we (verbally) esteem as divine, not only denounce the love of money as the source of all evil, and as an idolatry abhorred of the Deity, but declare mammon service to be the accurate and irreconcileable opposite of God's service . . . . (XVII, 75-76)

Ten years later in the letters of **Fors Clavigera**, Ruskin again underlined this obvious contradiction between religious and economic dogma:

> You were ordered by the Founder of your religion to love your neighbours as yourselves.
>
> You have founded an entire Science of Political Economy, on what you have stated to be the constant instinct of man--the desire to defraud his neighbour. (Letter 5; XXVII, 94-95)

The pages of **Fors Clavigera** are filled with Ruskin's personal evaluation of his religious beliefs. In Letter 76, "Our Battle is Immortal," (March 4, 1877), Ruskin recounted the seeming paradoxes of belief he encountered in his studies of Christian and non-Christian artists. And he presented a brief outline of his own religious conversions and "unconversions." Before 1858 he said he was a misled Protestant Christian; from 1858 to 1874 everything he thought and wrote, based on "the Religion of Humanity," was "all sound and good, as far as it went." After 1874 he was able to accept membership in any professed religion that followed the laws of God,

> holding only for sure God's order to His scattered Israel,--"He hath shown thee, oh man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Letter 76; XXIX, 92)

On such beliefs are Ruskin's social and economic ideas based. In this seventy-sixth letter, he seemed to have returned to Christianity but in an open-minded and spiritually healthy way. "You cannot but have noticed--any of you who read attentively,--that Fors has become much more distinctly Christian in its tone . . . [than] my former works" (XVII, 86).

The earlier letters of **Fors** more clearly reveal Ruskin's struggle with Christianity. In Letter 12, "The Prince's Lesson," (December 23, 1871), for example, he indicated his doubts about believing that Christ was truly the Son of God. He asked his readers:

> Are you indeed *sure* He was? I mean, with real happening of the strange things you have been told, that the Heavens opened near Him, showing their hosts, and that one of their stars stood still over his head? You are sure of that, you say? I am glad; and wish it were so with me; but

> I have been so puzzled lately by many matters that once seemed clear to me, that I seldom now feel sure of anything. (Letter 12; XVII, 200-01)

Though he had doubts, too, about the truth of the Nativity, he did not underestimate its importance on the minds of men. He explained:

> For one of two things this story of the Nativity is certainly, and without any manner of doubt. It relates either a fact full of power, or a dream full of meaning. It is, at the least, not a cunningly devised fable, but the record of an impression made, by some strange spiritual cause, on the minds of the human race, at the most critical period of their existence;--an impression which has produced, in past ages, the greatest effect on mankind ever yet achieved by an intellectual conception; and which is yet to guide, . . . the absolute destiny of ages to come. (Letter 12; XXVII, 201)

The teachings of Christ and the stories about Christ serve as a "guide" for all of Ruskin's social writings and for his hoped for Utopia, St. George's Guild. In Letter 63, "Sit in Splendour," (1876), he firmly established Christ as the Master of the Guild, and His teachings as its guidelines.

The pattern of comparison between the teachings of Solomon and modern economic teachings leads to a Ruskinian diatribe against the orthodox laws of competition, and of supply and demand (XVII, 60-63). In fact, all four essays which make up **Unto This Last** directly assault these laws which contradict the basis of Ruskin's economics. However, in this paper, and increasingly in his later economic and social writings, Ruskin's criticism of the orthodox position is more bitter, coloured with biting insult. Opposed to the injustice of the laws of supply and demand are what Ruskin called the just laws of distribution and restraint. The science of "getting rich by a just means" as opposed to getting rich by any means must give its attention to the just regulation of prices, wages, working conditions, and all other related social and economic policies. To deny that men can shape economic and social directions

> makes men as the creeping things, as the fishes of the sea, that have no ruler over them.
>
> It being the privilege of the fishes, as it is of rats and wolves, to live by the laws of demand and supply; but the distinction of humanity, to live by those of right. (XVII, 63)

As well as in Biblical teachings, Ruskinian economics finds support in sound humanism: Ruskin viewed man as a responsible, intellectual being; and devoted his economics to human interests and needs.

Though he continued arguments against the dogma of the orthodox position--arguments against the motivating force of competition and supply and demand--in **"Qui Judicatis Terram"** Ruskin focused on one specific economic issue: payment for labour. This concluding issue anticipates the economic advice of **Munera Pulveris.** Orthodox economics, based on the principle of competition, wrote Ruskin, allow unjust payment for labour, while his own economics, based on absolute exchange, advocate just payment. Once Ruskin redefined the justice of his and the injustice of the accepted methods of payment, he compared the social and economic results of a just and unjust payment of labour. In this final comparison is the nucleus of his social and political philosophy.

As he had explained in "The Veins of Wealth," Ruskin here wrote that "in practice, according to the laws of demand and supply, when two men are ready to do the work, and only one man wants to have it done, the two men underbid each other for it; and the one who gets it to do, is under-paid. But when two men want the work done, and there is only one man ready to do it, the two men who want it done overbid each other, and the workman is over-paid" (XVII, 64). Ruskin compared the injustice of the payment of labour when in the employer's favour (when two men are ready to do the work) with, what he called, *his* just payment of labour, based on the principle of exchange.

The abstract theory of exchange simply means giving "time for time, strength for strength, and skill for skill" (XVII, 65) or paying a labourer enough to procure from someone else as much labour as he gives to his employer.

> The abstract idea, then, of just or due wages, as respects the labourer, is that they will consist in a sum of money which will at any time procure for him at least as much labour as he has given, rather more than less. And this equity or justice of payment is, observe, wholly independent of any reference to the number of men who are willing to do the work.

Ruskin, as is his method, followed this definition with an example:

> I want a horseshoe for my horse. Twenty smiths, or twenty thousand smiths, may be ready to forge it; their number does not in one atom's weight affect the question of the equitable payment of the one who *does* forge it. It costs him a quarter of an hour of his life, and so much skill and strength of arm, to make that horseshoe for me. Then at some future time I am bound in equity to give a quarter of an hour, and some minutes more, of my life . . . in making or doing what the smith may have need of. (XVII, 66)

Ruskin did not overlook the difficulties of applying this abstract theory of exchange. In theory, time for time and skill for skill is a simply determined equation. But in practice, currency has a greater practical value and applicability than does a promise for a specific form of labour. Because money, the convenient medium of exhange, is given in payment for present labour, a monetary value for labour has to be determined. There is also a difficulty in determining the monetary value of a skill when equating labour with labour. In a lengthy footnote, Ruskin explained that education, intellect, experience, and emotions have to be considered when trying to assess the value of a man's skill in his labour. The difficulties, though, of evaluating the time and skill of labour in terms of currency does not change the conclusion that the payment of labour according to the principle of exchange is just, while payment according to supply and demand is unjust. In fact Ruskin believed that the difficulties associated with exchange are not as severe as those produced by the supply and demand approach to payment:

> Nor is there so much difficulty or chance in determining [the payment of labour by the just means of exchange], as in determining the ordinary maxima and minima of vulgar political economy. There are few bargains in which the buyer can ascertain with anything like precision that the seller would have taken no less;--or the seller acquire more than a comfortable faith that the purchaser would have given no more. This impossibility of precise knowledge prevents neither from striving to attain the desired point of greatest vexation and injury to the other, nor from accepting it for a scientific principle that he is to buy for the least and sell for the most possible, though what the real least or most may be he cannot tell.

The comparison of orthodox and Ruskinian economic principles on which this essay is structured reappears in Ruskin's conclusion to this passage in which he pointed out that

> in like manner, a just person lays it down for a scientific principle that he is to pay a just price, and, without being able precisely to ascertain the limits of such a price, will nevertheless strive to attain the closest possible approximation to them. A practically serviceable approximation he *can* obtain. It is easier to determine scientifically what a man ought to have for his work, than what his necessities will compel him to take for it. His necessities can only be ascertained by empirical, but his due by analytical, investigation. (XVII, 68)

The results of just and unjust payment for labour remained to be contrasted.

Ruskin drew his comparisons by expanding the case in favour of the employer (purchaser) which occurs when two men are ready to do work which another one wanted to have done. Recall that according to the orthodox principle of supply and demand the two workers compete against each other until the lowest possible wage either will accept is reached. For simplicity Ruskin assumed this amount to be half the just price for the labour. In this final comparison used in "Qui Judicatis Terram," Ruskin stressed that whether an employer pays his workers justly or not, the same number of men will be employed and the same number unemployed. The first or "apparent difference" is that the just employer pays the worker sufficient, the unjust pays him insufficient. But the more important or "actual difference" is that "by the unjust procedure, half the proper price of the work is left in the hands of the employer" (XVII, 69); "By the just procedure, the whole price of the first piece of work goes into the hands of the man who does it" (XVII, 69). In these passages lie the *social implications* of Ruskin's economic teachings.

The circulation of wealth among numbers of men rather than the acquisition of it and its power by one man is from start to finish of his social thought the main object of "political" economics, and should be, according to Ruskin, the main aim of government. In explaining "actual difference" in methods of payment he wrote that

> the universal and constant action of justice in this matter is therefore to diminish the power of wealth, in the hands of one individual, over masses of men, and to distribute it through a chain of men. The actual power exerted by the wealth is the same in both cases; but by injustice it is put all into one man's hands, so that he directs at once and with equal force the labour of a circle of men about him; by the just procedure, he is permitted to touch the nearest only, through whom, with diminished force,

> modified by new minds, the energy of the wealth passes on to others, and so till it exhausts itself. (XVII, 70)

He continued to explicate this significant difference. The operation of justice in the payment of wages diminishes the power of individual wealth, thereby diminishing any man's acquisition of luxury and the exercise of his influence over other men. More importantly, the just payment, which gives the worker sufficient for his labour, gives him the power to better his social position:

> The insufficient payment of the group of men working for one, places each under a maximum of difficulty in rising above his position. The tendency of the system is to check advancement. But the sufficient or just payment, distributed through a descending series of offices or grades of labour, gives each subordinated person fair and sufficient means of rising in the social scale, if he chooses to use them; and thus not only diminishes the immediate power of wealth, but removes the worst disabilities of poverty. (XVII, 70-71)

Though Ruskin cited other causes for a labourer's inability to better himself (for example taxation),{24} he emphasized the unjust payment of labour, working against the distribution of wealth, as the only real cause of the impoverishment of the worker.

In conclusion to this contrastive section he wrote that "the destiny of the poor depends primarily always on this one question of dueness of wages. Their distress . . . arises on the grand scale from the two reacting forces of competition and oppression" (XVII, 73). Here are the same conclusions he arrived at in **The Stones of Venice, Modern Painters,** and **A Joy For Ever.** Ruskin, in fact, quoted key statements from **Modern Painters** and **A Joy For Ever** indicating the continuity of his ideas from the earlier art writings to these later writings on economics and social problems:

> My principles of Political Economy were all involved in a single phrase spoken three years ago at Manchester: "Soldiers of the Ploughshare as well as Soldiers of the Sword": and they were all summed in a single sentence in the last volume of **Modern Painters**--"Government and co-operation are in all things the Laws of Life; Anarchy and competition the Laws of Death." (XVII, 74-75){25}

In Ruskin's scheme of things more concern must be given the labourer: the conditions of and wages for his work must be improved; and the common doctrines of political economy must be abandoned for the juster doctrines described so fully in this third essay. Still believing that he would be able to continue writing economic papers for the **Cornhill Magazine,** he promised to give more attention in future essays to the "operation of justice" in society; this attention it received in the pages of **Munera Pulveris** and in less central works such as **The Crown of Wild Olive.** However, Ruskin reserved essay number four for the definition of value.

Before Ruskin began writing the fourth essay Thackeray informed him it would be his final paper on economics for the **Cornhill Magazine.** Taking advantage of this last opportunity to present his views in a widely-read publication, Ruskin expanded this paper to make it longer than the previous three. Repeating earlier ideas and once again attacking the orthodox positions advocated by Ricardo and Mill, Ruskin organized "Ad Valorem" around four areas of definition: Value; Wealth (and by its negation Illth); Price; and Production. He began by stressing the ambiguity of the terms "Value," "Wealth," "Price," and "Produce," explaining that "none of these terms are yet defined so as to be understood by the public" (XVII, 77). His earlier manuscript contained the fuller statement that

> most persons confuse the value of a thing with its price (which is as though they should estimate the healing powers of a medicine by the charge of the apothecary); confuse the wealth (or the possessions which constitute the well-being of an individual) with the riches (or the possessions which constitute power over others); and, finally, confuse production, or profit, which is an increase of the possessions of the world, with Acquisition or Gain, which is an increase of the possessions of one person by the diminution of those of another. (footnote #2; XVII, 77)

The ambiguity, he explained, results from the unsoundness of the orthodox positions, such as those in Ricardo's **Principles of Political Economy and Taxation** and Mill's **Principles of Political Economy.** He referred to specific passages on value in these two works to exemplify the ambiguity (sections 59 and 60). John T. Fain, in **Ruskin and the Economists**, analyzing the logic and fairness of Ruskin's criticisms of the Mill and Ricardo discussions of value (XVII, 79-80), convincingly explained that Ruskin's arguments are inapplicable to the Mill and Ricardo passages which he quoted. Fain showed that Ruskin ignored the terminological distinctions between his writings and the writings he criticized, that he used examples from Ricardo's **Principles** to illustrate his own labour theory of value, thus falsifying Ricardo's position, and that he skipped pages of discussion when quoting Ricardo and Mill, which in several instances unfairly changed the context of their ideas.{26} Also, Ruskin's criticisms of Mill are overly harsh, indicative of an irrational anger and irritation too often vented at Mill. Early in this fourth paper, for example, he summarized Mill's political-economic writings:

> The value of [Mr. Mill's] work [proceeds] from its inconsistencies. He deserves honour among economists by inadvertently disclaiming the principles which he states, and tacitly introducing the moral considerations with which he declares his science has no connection. Many of his chapters are, therefore, true and valuable; and the only conclusions of his which I have to dispute are those which follow from his premises. (XVII, 79)

In spite of his misrepresentation of Ricardo and Mill and his failure to explicate their use of economical terms, he was careful to clarify the terminology of his own economics. In defense of the space he gave to definition in this final paper, he explained that "this business of Political Economy is no light one, and [that] we must allow no loose terms in it" (XVII, 86), a point made also in the first chapter of **Munera Pulveris**. His discussions of these four terms represents a major contribution to political economics. His humanization of economics and his application of social conscience to economics, both contributions in themselves, moved the nineteenth-century thinker closer to the mind of the twentieth-century sociologist. As J. A. Hobson explained in his lengthy defense and summary of Ruskin's social and economic thought:

> Our claim is not that Mr. Ruskin has formed a system of sociology, or that he has advanced far towards such a system, but that he has pointed the way to such a science and has laid down certain hypotheses of fact and terminology such as are consistent with advances made independently by other scientific men. By insisting upon the reduction of all economic terms, such as value, cost, utility, & c., [sic] to terms of "vitality," by insisting upon the organic integrity and unity of all human activities, and the organic nature of the co-operation of the social units, and finally by furnishing a social ideal of reasonable humanity, Mr. Ruskin has amply justified his claim as a pioneer in the theory of Social Economics.{27}

Ruskin's definitions differed from those of the orthodox economist by including humanistic dimensions. He denied the purely monetary connotations of value, wealth, price, and production. According to Ruskin, financial gain is not the final object of political economics; "the money-gain is only the shadow of the true gain, which is humanity" (XVII, 102). In these discussions of terminology he repeated the argument started in the writings on art and **A Joy For Ever**, and continued in "The Roots of Honour," "The Veins of Wealth," and "Qui

Judicatis Terram."

For the sections on Value and Wealth he restated many of the key ideas of "The Veins of Wealth." Tracing the meaning of value back to its Latin "valorem," Ruskin pointed out that "to be 'valuable', therefore, is to 'avail toward life'" (XVII, 84). And to be wealthy is to possess things which can be used "to avail towards life." The brief section on Value concludes with the assessment that

> the real science of political economy, which has yet to be distinguished from the bastard science, as medicine from witchcraft, and astronomy from astrology, is that which teaches nations to desire and labour for the things that lead to life: and which teaches them to scorn and destroy the things that lead to destruction. (XVII, 85)

As in his earlier essays and in the social passages of the art trilogy, by "destruction" Ruskin implied the social ills which result in a general lack of health and happiness in the people of a society. Echoing the sentiments of **A Joy For Ever**, he wrote that wealth, the possession of valuable things, must mean more than Accumulation. Wealth must be Distributed (XVII, 88). Here Ruskin aligned himself with reformers and distributionists against the competition and "let alone" principles of the orthodox economists. He created the word "illth" in this passage to describe an accumulation of goods not used for the good of men. Clyde E. Dankert, in his article, "Wealth and Illth--Ruskin Reconsidered," explained that some

> goods, and we can also include similar kinds of services, instead of contributing to human welfare lead to human "illfare". It was Ruskin who coined the very suggestive term "illth", though in his writings he appears to use the word only twice, and then in the limited sense of excess wealth. In **Unto This Last** he has the word cover the portion of their wealth that owners are "inherently and eternally" incapable of using properly (XVII, 89). In **Munera Pulveris** he uses the term in a similar fashion applying it to excessive amounts of "property" and "any other things" . . . . In **Fors** (Letter 7, XXVII, 122) Ruskin expands the term to "Common-Illth."{28}

He expanded upon the social ills resulting from the orthodox positions in the longer sections discussing Price and Production. In the sections on Price Ruskin included definitions of profit and advantage in the market place, and a comparison of the Orthodox Science of Exchange with Just or Economical Exchange. His examination of Production incorporates discussions of capital and its functions, and of the relationship between production and consumption. As Ruskin explained earlier in this essay, he had planned to devote an entire paper to each of these topics; the paper on Price to be titled "Thirty Pieces" and the one on Production "Demeter" (XVII, 81). However, with the **Cornhill** refusing to publish more, these topics, here simply touched on, had to be continued in **Munera Pulveris** and in the essays "Work" (1864) and "Traffic" (1865) included in **The Crown of Wild Olive** (1866).

The price of an object, its exchange value, is usually translated into currency. The key word here is "exchange." Ruskin began by insisting that there is no profit in exchange itself; nothing new or additional is constructed or produced through exchange. Profit results only from labour. Exchange, on the other hand, results in advantage or accquisition. In defining these terms, Ruskin began by looking at mercantile exchange. In a passage strongly reminiscent of his explanation of relative wealth and riches in "The Veins of Wealth" (XVII, 44) he wrote:

> If, in the exchange, one man is able to give what cost him little labour for what has cost the other much, he "acquires" a certain quantity of the produce of the other's labour. And precisely what he acquires, the other loses. In mercantile language, the person who thus acquires is commonly said to have "made a profit"; and I believe that many of our merchants are seriously under the impression that it is possible for everybody, somehow, to make a profit in this manner. Whereas, by the unfortunate constitution of the world we live in, the laws both of matter and motion have quite rigorously forbidden universal acquisition of this kind. Profit, or material gain, is attainable only by construction or by discovery; not by exchange. Whenever material gain follows exchange, for every *plus* there is a precisely equal *minus*.
>
> Unhappily for the progress of the science of Political Economy, the plus quantities, or--if I may be allowed to coin an awkward plural--the pluses, make a very positive and venerable appearance in the world, so that every one is eager to learn the science which produces results so magnificent; whereas the minuses have, on the other hand, a tendency to retire into back streets, and other places of shade,--or even to get themselves wholly and finally put out of sight in graves: which renders the algebra of this science peculiar, and difficultly legible; a large number of its negative signs being written by the account-keeper in a kind of red ink, which starvation thins, and makes strangely pale, or even quite invisible ink, for the present. (XVII, 91-92)

The image of the citizens produced by the Science of Exchange or the Science of Catallactics, as people starving and dying in the back streets of the country is the kind of image which persists throughout the rest of Ruskin's writings.

Ruskin argued that a competitive system works to the advantage of only some citizens of a Polis; and that a competitive system with no social conscience works to the advantage of a minority. Furthermore, the catallactic science depends

> wholly upon the ignorance, powerlessness, or heedlessness of the person dealt with. Do away with these, and catallactic advantage becomes impossible. (XVII, 92)

Ruskin, whose social teaching demands responsibility for one's fellowman and encourages co-operation in all activities, necessarily condemned catallactic exchange. In place of the orthodox science of exchange he pronounced

> the general law, then, respecting just or economical exchange, [which] is simply this:--There must be advantage on both sides (or if only advantage on one, at least no disadvantage on the other) to the persons exchanging; and just payment for his time, intelligence, and labour, to any intermediate person affecting the transaction (commonly called a merchant); and whatever advantage there is on either side, and whatever pay is given to the intermediate person, should be thoroughly known to all concerned. (XVII, 93)

Deception and self-interest, claimed Ruskin, have nothing to do with just pricing, that is the just exchange of currency or of labour for some object of need or desire.{29} These ideas take practical form in Ruskin's suggestion for trade guilds presented in Letter XIV of **Time and Tide.**

The opposition between monetary wealth and the wealth of humanism, an opposition evident throughout the pages of **Unto This Last**, reaches its climax in the sections on Production. Repeating much that he had written in **The Stones of Venice** and **A Joy For Ever**, Ruskin asserted that the tests of true production are the kinds of labour it employs, and the consumption which follows. True production contributes to health and happiness in life. The true function of capital is to serve some life-giving purpose. Capital, which is a "root material," does not contribute to the wealth of a nation simply by reproducing itself (XVII, 98-102). "The question for the nation is not how much labour it employs, [or capital it accumulates] but how much life it produces," (XVII, 104) and "the prosperity of any nation is in exact proportion to the quantity of labour [or capital] which it spends in obtaining and employing means of life . . . ; that is to say, not merely wisely producing, but wisely distributing and consuming" (XVII, 98).

Ruskin understood the cause and effect relationship between consumption and production. If consumers purchase products made by overworked and underpaid labourers, then the consumer supports those conditions of labour. On this point Ruskin concluded that "the most curious error in Mr. Mill's entire work, (provided for him originally by

Ricardo,) is his . . . assertion that a demand for commodities is not a demand for labour (I.V.9, et, seq.)" (XVII, 102).{30} The consumer must recognize the life-giving or life-taking implications of the labour involved in a product, as well as the live-giving or life-taking properties of the product itself. Ruskin explained that

> when you give a man half a crown, it depends on his disposition whether he is rich or poor with it--whether he will buy disease, ruin, and hatred, or buy health, advancement, and domestic love. And thus the agreeableness or exchange value of every offered commodity depends on production, not merely of the commodity, but of buyers of it; therefore on the education of buyers. (XVII, 81)

Ruskin's thoughts on education, social science, and political economics and on price and production all relate directly to his definition of wealth. All these areas of thought culminate in the closing remarks on production:

> THERE IS NO WEALTH BUT LIFE. Life including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the function of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal, and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others.
>
> A strange political economy; the only one, nevertheless, that ever was or can be: all political economy founded on self-interest being but the fulfilment of that which once brought schism into the Policy of Angels, and ruin into the Economy of Heaven. (XVII, 105)

In his analysis of Ruskin's indictment of the orthodox position on production and consumption, J. A. Hobson summarized:

> Cost of Production, according to the text-books [or the orthodox position], was the quantity of money paid to get work done, or in the more recent treatment, the amount of labour-power measured by time or some objective standard; cost of production, according to Mr. Ruskin, is expenditure of life. The only standard of utility recognized by the orthodox theory is monetary measure of desire. Mr. Ruskin's utility means promotion of life and happiness. By thus vitalizing and moralizing every term and every process Mr. Ruskin forms the outline of a Political Economy which is primarily concerned with the production of healthy life, the manufacture of "souls of a good quality."{31}

By the time he finished **Unto This Last**, Ruskin had defined and established the premises and the goals of his political economics.

In the closing pages of **Unto This Last** he moved away from the issues of definition to make several final appeals. The first is an appeal to the middle and upper classes to recognize and accept their responsibility to educate the lower classes. Ruskin assumed that only through education can attitudes change, can society as a whole improve. "Charitable persons suppose the worst fault of the rich is to refuse the people meat; . . . it is not meat of which the refusal is cruelest . . . . The rich not only refuse food to the poor; they refuse wisdom; they refuse virtue; they refuse salvation" (XVII, 106-07). In his second appeal, Ruskin asked that education include the teaching of "the art of life," that it instill in all men a desire for the beauty of human life and the natural world. "As the art of life is learned," he told his readers, "it will be found at last that all lovely things are also necessary;--the wild flower by the wayside, as well as the tended cattle . . . " (XVII, 111). In his third appeal he called for individual rather than public effort to improve human life. Society needs more people "resolved to seek--not greater wealth, but simpler pleasure; not higher fortune, but deeper felicity; making the first of possessions, self-possession; and honouring themselves in the harmless pride and calm pursuits of peace" (XVII, 112). Ruskin, capturing the central issues of the social texts to follow, concluded with a paragraph repeating his main economic suggestions, thus forming a set of economic guidelines for his readers:

> all true economy is "Law of the house." Strive to make that law strict, simple, generous: waste nothing, and grudge nothing. Care in nowise to make more of money, but care to make much of it; remembering always the great, palpable, inevitable fact--the rule and root of all economy--that what one person has, another cannot have; and that every atom of substance, of whatever kind, used or consumed, is so much human life spent; which, if it issue in the saving present life, or gaining more, is well spent, but if not is either so much life prevented, or so much slain. In all buying, consider, first, what condition of existence you cause in the producers of what you buy; secondly, whether the sum you have paid is just to the producer, and in due proportion, lodged in his hands; thirdly, to how much clear use, for food, knowledge, or joy, this that you have bought can be put; and fourthly, to whom and in what way it can be most speedily and serviceably distributed; in all dealing whatsoever insisting on entire openness and stern fulfilment; and in all doings, on perfection and loveliness of accomplishment; especially on finess and purity of all marketable commodity; watching at the same time for all ways of gaining, or teaching, powers of simple pleasure.

(XVII, 113-14)

The kind of economic existence to which men are motivated by the orthodox position, Ruskin added, can only exist side by side with extreme poverty. We must be willing to put aside personal fortune and luxury in order to accept personal responsibility for the livelihood and living conditions of all members of society; to work towards "Christ's gift of bread, and bequest of peace, which shall be 'Unto this last as unto thee' . . . " (XVII, 114).

Recall E. T. Cook's suggestion of a three-fold purpose in Ruskin's political-economic writing:

> He sought to overthrow the basis of the accepted doctrine (Unto This Last); to outline a scheme of Social Economy which should take its place (Munera Pulveris); and to show how its principles would work . . . (Time and Tide). (XVII, lxxxiii)

Having completed the first step in the four essays of **Unto This Last**, Ruskin began to outline social projects and policies such as universal education. In the preface, written at the time of publication (1862), he clarified the directions of his social policy in his proposals for government training schools and workshops, for protection against unemployment, and for care of the homeless and the aged. His "scheme of Social Economy" along with many of the economic ideas touched on in the essays of **Unto This Last**, found their way into the later social works, most notably in the next major text, **Munera Pulveris**.

Munera Pulveris, which translated means "Gifts of the Dust," works on multiple levels of meaning. The title is taken from a passage by Horace (Odes i. 28) which Ruskin quoted as the epigraph to **Munera Pulveris.** The translation of this passage is extremely difficult for, as E. T. Cook explained, it is not clear who is speaking, who is being addressed or what the purpose of the passage to the whole is (XVII, lxv). However, Cook gave a literal translation of the lines at the beginning of **Munera Pulveris:** "Once thou measuredst the sea and earth and the countless sand; now, Archytas, art thou contained in the small gifts of a little dust by the Matin Shore" (XVII, lxvi). Cook followed this translation with an explication of the title (XVII, lxv-lxviii), including the following:

> Archytas . . . was a philosopher--a professor, it may be, of some dismal science; a man given to "counting the sand"--a proverbial expression with the Greeks and Romans for wasted trouble. It is therefore probable enough that Ruskin intended partly, by this initial motto for his book, to apostrophise the professors of the pseudo-science, as he called it. Again, he often reverted in mind to this economic doctrine and practice of gathering dust. (XVII, lxvii)

The dismal exercise of "counting grains of sand," rewarded only by the puffs of dust left when finished, is Ruskin's metaphor for the activities of nineteenth-century orthodox economists. At the same time "dust" as a metaphor for land is a positive image in Ruskin's writings. Working the land, protecting the land, studying the land (nature) are among man's most worthy activities, activities which contribute to the true wealth of a country. For example, of land he wrote that "its value is twofold; first, as producing food and mechanical power; secondly, as an object of sight and thought, producing intellectual power" (XVII, 154-55). So, paradoxically, **Munera Pulveris**, the "Gifts of the Dust," denigrates the futility of orthodox political economy while at the same time enhances the virtue of Ruskin's own.

The purpose and format of **Munera Pulveris**, which stands as a reference book to Ruskin's social and economic theory, present some difficulties for the reader of this second major social work. After completing **Unto This Last** Ruskin devoted the fall of 1861 to a concentrated study of the classics, especially of Xenophon, Plato, Homer, Livy, and Horace, with the intent of resuming and completing his essays on political economy. Where Ruskin had alluded to Biblical passages in **Unto This Last** to give his ideas an authority based on the Bible, in **Munera Pulveris** he alluded to the classics to suggest his affinity with them. Though he found examples in both sources to support his arguments, his suggestion of authority by association is both misleading and sophistical. He hoped to alienate orthodox economic thought from Biblical teachings and classical economics, thus strengthening his own arguments.

More than any other single work, Ruskin used Xenophon's **Economist**, a Socratic dialogue concerning a country gentleman who shares his wealth co-operatively, to establish the foundations of his own economic studies. He was able to find condemnation of orthodox economic positions in the pages of Xenophon. In a letter to his father (Bonneville, October 6, 1861) Ruskin referred to the Greek economist's statement that among the foolish thinkers are "those fellows in the exchange who are always thinking how they may buy cheapest and sell dearest" (XVII, xlvi). Ruskin included a short discussion of the economist in the third appendix to **Munera Pulveris**, "The Economy of Horace and Xenophon" (XVII, 287-89). The editors of the **Works** edition felt that Ruskin's use of Xenophon was enough to justify an inclusion of an English translation in Volume Thirty-one.{32}

In addition to studying Xenophon and the other mentioned authors during the eighteen-sixties, Ruskin renewed his interest in Greek and Roman mythology. Not only do the titles of all Ruskin's later works contain allusions to the classics, but such allusions are found throughout the pages of **Munera Pulveris**. His use of the classics to illustrate his political-economic ideas, as E. T. Cook explained, "makes the book somewhat difficult to read closely" and sometimes led Ruskin "into fanciful analogies, dubious etymologies, and strained interpretations" (XVII, lxiv). Cook further pointed out that Ruskin read the classics for their language as much as for their ideas. "The study of words had great fascination for him, and it was one of the conspicuous features in his next book, **Munera Pulveris**" (XVII, xlix). Though this second work is

> very closely reasoned, and . . . follows throughout a clear plan . . . there is mixed with it so much of excursus into classical fields, so much of verbal and literary argument, that readers fail to keep hold of the main thread. (Cook; XVII, lxvii)

Even Ruskin, in his preface to **Munera Pulveris**, regretted the "affected concentration of language," especially in the last four chapters (XVII, 145).

Assessments and summaries of **Munera Pulveris** have been brief. John D. Rosenberg, in **The Darkening Glass**, gave less than two pages to it and these form part of his discussion of Ruskin's mental fatigue and breakdown (Chapter IX, "Unstable as Water"). Rather than explicate the ideas or purpose of the text, Rosenberg argued that "**Munera Pulveris** is the first of Ruskin's books which clearly reveals his mental imbalance" and "the pathology of Ruskin's mind."{33} He suggested that only in the first chapter of this work did Ruskin maintain a logical discussion of his social and economic theory. In a highly speculative manner, Rosenberg summarized:

> Bored with his subject but incapable of rest, committed to writing a tightly organized treatise but hostile to the form, he branches into countless digressions, some of startling brilliance and some wholly unintelligible.{34}

Rosenberg concluded that the minor lectures, **Sesame and Lilies** (1865) and **The Crown of Wild Olive** (1866) represent a shift back to the social directions of **Unto This Last**.

Contrary to Rosenberg's view, I contend that **Munera Pulveris** can be read as the logically planned sequel to **Unto This Last**, nowhere unintelligible. Hobson, in his early analysis of Ruskin as a social reformer, noted the stylistic and structural weakness of **Munera Pulveris** while still recognizing the strength of its ideas. He described the work as "the most brilliant and effective exposition of [Ruskin's] social theory."{35} Frederic Harrison, who agreed with the criticism of Cook, Rosenberg, and Ruskin himself that **Munera Pulveris** contains too many digressions, also agreed with Hobson that it effectively explains Ruskin's social theory. Harrison wrote that **Munera Pulveris**, like **Unto This Last**,

> rests on the same general idea that the orthodox economists assumed men to be moved solely by interested motives, whilst in reality men and societies are exceedingly complex organisms, and their acts and purposes can only be rationally understood when they are treated as complex organisms.
>
> At the outset Ruskin, in his vague and fanciful way, does seize the root of the matter that there can be no rational political economy apart from a comprehensive Sociology. Of course, both the term and the idea in its full sense are quite foreign to him and to his mode of thought, but he seizes the truth. A rational political economy can only be a deduction from a complete philosophy of society. With astonishing wit, eloquence, and ingenuity, Ruskin illustrates and enforces this text.{36}

Philippe Jaudel, in **La Pensée Sociale de John Ruskin** (1972) also praised **Munera Pulveris** for strength of idea and eloquence of style:

> D'un style vigoureux, tantôt incisif, tantôt éloquent, elles allient, à l'acuité des

> perceptions de l'artiste, au don de divination du poète, un réel effort d'analyse et, bien que leur brio tourne parfois à la polémique, elles offrent sans doute l'aspect le plus solide de la pensée de Ruskin.{37}

Munera Pulveris, like any reference book, is not meant to be read in one sitting. Ruskin was quite candid in his comment that he "never intended the book for anything else than a dictionary of reference, and that for earnest readers" (XVII, 145). In fact, he used it himself for reference when writing the letters of **Fors Clavigera** (XVII, 144). In the preface Ruskin explained that he had hoped "to write an exhaustive treatise on Political Economy" and that he planned the four essays written for **Fraser's Magazine** (published later as six chapters) as "the preface of the intended work" (XVII, 143).{38} In a final note to the last essay, he wrote that "the present paper completes the definitions necessary for future service. The next in order will be the first chapter of the body of the work" (XVII,290). Though Ruskin never wrote his great work on political economy, in **Time and Tide**, the lectures of the sixties, and the letters of **Fors Clavigera** he expanded the ideas of **Unto This Last** and **Munera Pulveris**, giving them prominence to the end of his writing career.

Ruskin continued his attack on orthodox economic doctrines in **Munera Pulveris**. In his preface, added in 1872, he briefly summarized that attack. In general, he criticized severely the laws of supply and demand

(XVII,135-36), and of wages determined by competition (XVII, 137). More specifically, he condemned John Stuart Mill's conviction that for the purposes of studying political economics, everyone has a clear enough notion of what is meant by "wealth" (XVII, 131-32). In the first chapter of **Munera Pulveris** Ruskin stated his foremost criticism as he began to express his own view of political economy:

> the assumption which lies at the root of nearly all erroneous reasoning on political economy . . . [is] that its object is to accumulate money or exchangeable property. (XVII, 148)

Ruskin asserted that the ultimate object of political economy is the encouragement of healthy and happy life (ch. I; XVII, 148-49). His main premise in **Munera Pulveris**, strongly resembling his earlier social pronouncements, states that the goal of economic study is much more than the mere accumulation of money and material goods; the analysis of a country's wealth involves the recognition of intrinsic rather than market value and of accountability to the human factors of political economy.

In an attempt to outline his own system of political economy while organizing the views expressed in the earlier social writing, Ruskin used the six chapters of **Munera Pulveris** to provide definitions of economic terminology crucial to that system. In Chapter One, "Definitions," the most general and analytical of the six, he examined six large areas already touched on in **Unto**

This Last: economy; usefulness; wealth; value; money; and riches. He gave the discussions of Wealth, Money, and Riches closest attention and used these to give thematic unity to the following chapters. In Chapters Two and Three, "Store-Keeping" and "Coin-Keeping," he posed the questions necessary to assess the sum of a nation's wealth. In Chapter Three, Ruskin used his theory of currency, strongly praised by Hobson, to tie together the earlier definitions of Wealth, Money, and Riches. Ruskin examined the process of exchanging currency for material goods and labour in Chapter Four, "Commerce," and in Chapter Five, "Government," he defined the ways in which the state contributes to the accumulation and distribution (use) of Wealth. He used the sixth chapter, "Mastership," to examine the relationships between the rich and the poor, and between employer and worker, and referred to his definitions of Wealth, Money, and Riches to support his findings. Topics in all six chapters, first introduced in the essays of **Unto This Last**, and broken into headings and sub-headings given at the beginning of **Munera Pulveris** (XVII, 129-30), form the outline for Ruskin's never-written treatise on Political Economy.

In the preface written nine years after completing the **Munera Pulveris** essays, Ruskin stressed his definition of wealth and the laws for its distribution as his primary point of departure from "Modern Political Economy," which had been "absolutely incompetent" in understanding the nature of a nation's Wealth (XVII, 137). Before publication of these essays, "not only the chief conditions of the production of wealth had remained unstated, but the nature of wealth itself had never been defined" (XVII, 131). Ruskin's definition of wealth, continuing from **Unto This Last**, serves not only as a starting point to this text, but is essential to his entire system of political economy. Recalling that the true aim of political economy is to enhance life, Ruskin stressed that only that which contributes to life, and raises the standard of man's "body, affections and intelligence," can be considered part of his wealth.

> The material things, therefore, which it is the object of political economy to produce and use, (or accumulate for use,) are things which serve either to sustain and comfort the body, or exercise rightly the affections and form the intelligence. Whatever truly serves either of these purposes is "useful" to man, wholesome, healthful, helpful, or holy. By seeking such things, man prolongs and increases his life upon the earth. (ch. I; XVII, 150-51)

Ruskin took his readers carefully step by step through his definition of wealth which involves an understanding of three related definitions: intrinsic value; acceptant capacity; and effectual value (XVII, 153-54). In a note to these pages he bluntly told his readers to "observe these definitions,--they are of much importance" (XVII, 153). As in **A Joy For Ever** and **Unto This Last** Ruskin again equated wealth with life: wealth consists of things essentially valuable and value is the life-giving power of anything. Value, unlike cost and price which are related to and discussed with his definitions of money, is not a commercial condition. Instead value is either intrinsic or effectual:

> Intrinsic value is the absolute power of anything to support life. A sheaf of wheat of given quality and weight has in it a measureable power of sustaining the substance of the body; a cubic foot of pure air, a fixed power of sustaining its warmth; and a cluster of flowers of given beauty a fixed power of enlivening or animating the senses and heart.
>
> It does not in the least affect the intrinsic value of the wheat, the air, or the flowers, that men refuse or despise them. Used or not, their own power is in them, and that particular power is in nothing else.
>
> But in order that this value of theirs may become effectual, a certain state is necessary in the recipient of it. The digesting, breathing, and perceiving functions must be perfect in the human creature before the food, air, or flowers can become of their full value to it. *The production of effectual value, therefore, always involves two needs: first, the production of a thing essentially useful; then the production of the capacity to use it.* Where the intrinsic value and acceptant capacity come together there is Effectual value, or wealth. (XVII, 153-54)

The possible "wealth" of any valuable thing{39} depends on the possessor's ability to put to use the thing in question. To borrow Ruskin's examples, a horse gives us no wealth if we cannot ride, nor does a picture if we cannot see. Each may be exchanged for money, or each may be considered as money, as "a cumbrous form of bank note" (ch. II; XVII, 167), but the accumulation of money is not equivalent to the acquiring of wealth. Ruskin illustrated these ideas by quoting a passage on "value in use" from Horace (**Satires**, ii, 3, 104):

> Were anybody to buy fiddles, and collect a number, being in no wise given to fiddling, nor fond of music: or if, being no cobbler, he collected awls and lasts, or having no mind for sea-adventure, bought sails, every one would call him a madman, and deservedly. But what difference is there between such a man and one who lays by coins and gold, and does not know how to use [sic], when he has got them? (Appendix III; XVII, 288)

Ruskin's assertion that wealth depends on intrinsic value and on possession stood in direct opposition to the commonly held economic positions of the nineteenth century. As a study of the accumulation merely of money and material goods, orthodox economics asserts that the worth of a thing (its wealth), can be increased by increasing the desire or demand for it; wealth according to the orthodox argument is linked to demand rather than to intrinsic value or proper use. At first thought, semantics may seem the cause of disagreement here.

Ruskin, in Chapter Two, "Store-Keeping," however, convincingly established the opposing definitions of wealth and value which are inherent in the opposing systems of political-economic thought. Ruskin stood strongly against a *laissez-faire* economic system which allows the entrepreneur to produce whatever he feels can be sold, with no concern for the benefit or harm to the producer, the worker, the consumer, the society, or the land. He denounced a capitalism which encourages the control of "valuable material things" in the hands of persons who cannot personally use those things. In these instances, warned Ruskin, the wealth, inherent in the improvement of life, is being traded merely for money. Ruskin's view of government as regulatory and his view of distributionist policy, developed in the final two chapters of **Munera Pulveris**, is in accord with his definitions of the nature of wealth.

In the title of the second chapter, "Store-Keeping," Ruskin was referring to the sum of a nation's wealth or its store which depends on its intrinsic value, and varies with the number and character of its possessors or its keepers. Once the "life-giving" stock of a nation is identified, the political economist must note who controls that stock and to what use it is put. Following Ruskin's argument then, the wealth of a country cannot be assessed simply by examining its holdings; a nation's wealth will fluctuate in accordance with the use of those holdings. These assertions further fuelled Ruskin's demands for an active and thinking role by government in its country's economics. Government regulation and intervention are keynotes in Ruskinian political economy.

Early in **Munera Pulveris**, however, Ruskin explained that the study of political economy involves an investigation not only of wealth, but of money and riches as well:

> these terms are often used as synonymous, but they signify entirely different things. "Wealth" consists of things in themselves valuable; "Money" of documentary claims to the possessions of such things; and "Riches" is a relative term,

> expressing the magnitude of the possessions of one person or society as compared with those of other persons or societies.
>
> The study of Wealth is a province of natural science:--it deals with the essential properties of things.
>
> The study of Money is a province of commercial science:--it deals with conditions of engagement and exchange.
>
> The study of Riches is a province of moral science:--it deals with the due relations of men to each other in regard of [sic] material possessions; and with the just laws of their association for purposes of labour. (XVII, 152-53)

The study of Money, the commercial science, is the one most recognizeably belonging to the world of economics in Ruskin's study. His explanations of currency are logical and succinct, and according to Hobson, deserving of some form of panegyric. In spite of Ruskin's accuracy in writing that *"the currency of any country consists of every document acknowledging debt, which is transferable in the country"* (ch. III; XVII, 194) and in spite of his ability to perceive that the instability in the standard of exchange provided by gold produces weaknesses in the system of national currency, Hobson rightly generalized that few economists, scientists, and businessmen will

> condescend to read passages in which an "amateur" states what he conceives to be the basic principles of a sound and socially serviceable currency. But those who understand the special weakness of all specialists, their detailed elaboration of superstructures built upon a foundation of general assumptions which have been commonly received upon authority, and have not been subjected to a strict, patient, and unbiased examination, may be inclined to give serious attention to the clear and original analysis presented by so powerful a mind as that of Mr. Ruskin.

Hobson's comment can be applied to almost all aspects of Ruskin's social and economic writings. More specifically to this issue of currency, Hobson attested that

> [Ruskin's] theory of currency, presented in "Munera Pulveris" and elsewhere, has not, indeed, the interest which attaches to his more violent "heresies," but it is a lucid presentation of certain fundamental principles which, rightly grasped, point towards financial reforms after which statesmen and trained financiers are tardily and darkly groping their way.{40}

As always, Ruskin was able to look at his subject without the distortion of habit or expectation. His careful examination of currency--what it is and how it works--reveals faults in common economic thought.

Because of a general misunderstanding of the differences between money and wealth, argued Ruskin, the economic goal of the orthodox economist is, for the most part, the sheer accumulation of money or of capital. A major error according to Ruskin's economic thought is the assumption that money and wealth are synonymous. Money, however,

> is not wealth, but a documentary claim to wealth, being the sign of the relative quantities of it, or of the labour producing it, to which, at a given time, persons, or societies, are entitled.
>
> If all the money in the world, notes and gold, were destroyed in an instant, it would leave the world neither richer nor poorer than it was. But it would leave the individual inhabitants of it in different relations.
>
> Money is, therefore, correspondent in its nature to the title-deed of an estate. Though the deed be burned, the estate still exists, but the right to it has become disputable. (ch. I; XVII, 157-58)

Once Ruskin clarified the relationship between wealth and money, he explained the fluctuation in the worth of money. In simplest terms:

> if the wealth increases, but not the money, the worth of the money increases; if the money increases, but not the wealth, the worth of the money diminishes. (XVII, 158)

As Ruskin explained in the following chapter, real worth and exchange worth are not necessarily the same. If "the diminution or increase of the represented wealth is unperceived, . . . the currency will be taken either for more or less than it is truly worth" (ch. II; XVII, 181). Ruskin went on to discuss the more complicated issues of circulating more currency to stimulate the production of wealth, especially when the currency itself has some supposed intrinsic value as in the case of gold or notes "deserving of credit." Pointing out that the use of substances of intrinsic value in currency is a carry over from the barter system, he explained that such issue is "still necessary, partly as a mechanical check on arbitrary issues [of additional currency]; partly as a means of exchange with foreign nations" (XVII, 159).

In the second chapter, "Store-Keeping," Ruskin continued to examine the fluctuations in the exchange rates of currency (money) and in what Ruskin called its exchange value (also referred to as its credit-power or its real worth). As much as it is related to existing material wealth, explained Ruskin, the real worth of money is also related to available labour (XVII, 158-82). In the pages of "Store Keeping," Ruskin defined the concept of labour and the related economic terms "Cost" and "Price"--"all cost and price are counted in labour" (XVII, 182). With a reference to **Unto This Last** (XVII, 94-95), he defined labour as life lost in work, "the negative quantity" in work, the "suffering in effort" whether of the body, the heart, or the mind. The object of political economy, explained Ruskin, must be to spare labour, not to buy or sell it. In an explanation reminiscent of passages from **Unto This Last**, Ruskin drew differences between cost and price, showing the relationship of both to labour. "The 'Cost' of anything is the quantity of labour necessary to obtain it" (XVII, 184); though price depends on the cost of the commodity, it fluctuates with "human will" (XVII, 186). Therefore, a mercantile society concerned only with price, commonly overpays or underpays for commodities.

Ruskin finally arrived at his definition of money or currency:

> in order to express [the] prices [of things] in terms of a currency, we have only to put the currency into the form of orders for a certain quantity of any given article (with us it is in the form of orders for gold), and all quantities of other articles are priced by the relation they bear to the article which the currency claims. (XVII, 189)

The worth (also called the real working power) of the currency itself is founded on the worth of every article for which gold is exchangeable. Worth simply indicates the "demand for" something: demand for money is dependent on the demand for any exchangeable article. For Ruskin the terms "value" and "wealth" are never synonymous to money and its worth. In a diary entry of 1862, he reproved political economists who make money rather than wealth the goal of their study:

> So to economists:--leaden friends, this is no economy . . . . You know not even what money means; before you can know anything of money, you must know something of *men*.{41}

This reprobation of money-motivated economic thought crystalizes in the closing section of "Store-Keeping":

> if the currency itself . . . becomes the sole object of desire with large numbers of the nation, so that the holding of it is disputed among them as the main object of life . . . the currency necessarily enlarges in proportion to the store; and as a means of exchange and division, as a bond of right, and as an object of passion, has a more and more important and malignant power over the nation's dealings, character, and life. (XVII,192)

In Chapter Three, "Coin-Keeping," he added that the desire to accumulate money would be "politically harmless if what was vainly accumulated had any fair chance of being wisely spent." However, he observed, beneficial distribution and use rarely follow, and he suggested, facetiously, as a political law

> that what is unreasonably gathered is also unreasonably spent by the persons into whose hands it finally falls. (XVII, 207)

These definitions and discussions of money support Ruskin's premise that the aims of political-economic studies must go far beyond the accumulation of capital by individual members of a society.

In Chapters Three and Four, "Coin-Keeping" and "Commerce," Ruskin included currency and commerce as part of his examination of exchange. "Currency conveys right of choice out of many things in exchange for one . . . . Commerce is the agency by which the power of choice is obtained" (ch. IV; XVII, 217). The credibility of the exchange value of the currency, wrote Ruskin, depends on three conditions: its intelligibility (the difficulty of forging anything like it); its credit (the existence of substantial means of meeting its demand); and the extent of its transferability (literally dealing with weight and size, and geographically and politically dealing with international fluidity). Ruskin also examined the credibility of using gold as the basis of currency. Though he discussed its strengths (for example, that its acknowledged intrinsic value makes gold acceptable everywhere), Ruskin concentrated on the problems of using gold as a standard. The major problem, he explained, results from its constantly fluctuating worth in the market place. "Power of obtaining other goods for gold depends always on the strength of public passion for gold, and on the limitation of its quantity, so that when either of two things happens--that the world esteems gold less, or finds it more easily--*my right of claim* [currency] *is in that degree effaced*." National currency must not be based on a substance which causes it to "vibrate with every miser's panic, and every merchant's imprudence," (ch. III; XVII, 199).{42}

Ruskin argued that an equal exchange must be given for any commodity, a demand directly related to his other social and economic ideas. As he explained, "legally authorized or national currency . . . is a form of public acknowledgement of debt" (ch. III; XVII, 195): a person must be able to exchange a commodity for a document (currency) which gives him claim to a further exchange for its *equivalent* in any place in the nation, at any future time, and in any form. He made pleas for government intervention in his claim that since "currency consists of orders for equivalent goods . . . their quality must be guaranteed" (XVII, 197). His demand for universal education is consistent with his observation that the power of choice inherent in holding currency results either in Wealth or Illth; people need to be educated in order to recognize true wealth. Appeals to the individual for co-operation and honesty in economics coincide with his assertion that the wealth of a nation depends far more on who holds its material goods and its currency than on how much is held, a claim that weaves throughout the first three chapters of **Munera Pulveris** {43} In terms of Commerce, Ruskin's primary precept continues to be that "you are bound to be true in your dealings with your neighbour" (XVII, 218), which at this point in our reading of his social texts, should sound familiar. Frustrated at the failure of his readers to understand the import of the statement, Ruskin complained,

> I have repeated the substance of this and the next paragraph so often since, that I am ashamed and weary. The thing is too true, and too simple, it seems, for anybody ever to believe. (XVII, 218)

As in **Unto This Last**, here Ruskin tried to convince economic thinkers that any gain for one individual at the expense of another in transactions of buying and selling bestows no overall political-economic gain. Citing the proverb, "Honesty is the best policy," he explained that the

> proverb is indeed wholly inapplicable to matters of private interest. It is not true that honesty, as far as material gain is concerned, profits individuals. A clever and cruel knave will in a mixed society always be richer than an honest person can be. But Honesty IS the best "policy," if policy mean [sic] practice of State. For fraud gains nothing in a State. It only enables the knaves in it to live at the expense of honest people; while there is for every act of fraud, however small, a loss of wealth to the community. Whatever the fraudulent person gains, some other person loses, as fraud produces nothing; and there is, *besides*, the loss of the time and thought spent in accomplishing the fraud, and of the strength otherwise obtainable by mutual help. (XVII, 228-29)

The commerce--the buying and the selling--encouraged by the economics of competition to create individual advantage, had, according to Ruskin, "warped itself" (XVII, 222) into working directly against political economy, the economy of society as a whole.

Ruskin described commerce as involving three parties: the two parties exchanging, and the agent or agents of exchange. To illustrate, Ruskin explained that a just exchange involves an agent commonly called a merchant, who receives pay, not profit, for carrying out the trade between two partners. Noted Ruskin, "by 'pay', I mean wages for labour or skill; by 'profit', gain dependent on the state of the market" (XVII, 219). The producers should receive goods of equal value and the merchant should be paid a known percentage by both. Concealment on the part of any party indicates either unjust profit on the part of the merchant or unjust payment on the part of the producers. Most often the merchant attempts to gain unjust profit which "depends first, on keeping the exchangers ignorant of the exchange value of the articles; and, secondly, on taking advantage of the buyer's need and the seller's poverty" (XVII, 220). He called such profit the most fatal form of "usury", meaning by this, "taking an exorbitant sum for the use of anything" (XVII, 220). The principles involved in exchange do not alter for the international market. One would be hard pressed to argue

> that it is right to cheat or rob across a river, though not across a road; or across a sea, though not across a river, etc. (XVII, 218)

The difficulties in encouraging honest dealings in exchange were not minimized by Ruskin. Though some attempt at maintaining honesty in trade may be through government intervention (Plato and Bacon have left some "good moderative forms of law" (XVII, 221)), the only real check on commerce "must be radical purifying of the national character" (XVII, 221).

In addition to the straight-forward discussions of currency and commerce, the third and fourth chapters of **Munera Pulveris** contain the first strong indications of Ruskin's interest in the classics. Though interruptive in terms of style, this interest is evident in Ruskin's absorbing discussions of Dante's **Hell** (cantos 7 and 17) and **Purgatory** (canto 19); in his interpretations of "The Sirens" as given by Plato, Dante, Virgil, Homer, and Bacon; in his analysis of Homer's account of Ulysses (Odyssey, xii); and in his thoughts on Shakespeare's **Merchant of Venice.** These discussions create never-ending analogies and symbolic references tightly related to Ruskin's political-economic thought. For example, in the **Inferno,** Dante, described three kinds of unworthy users of riches: the largest group in all of Hell, the avaricious and prodigal whose souls are lost forever due to their rivalry (**Hell**, canto 7); the avaricious and prodigal whose souls are redeemable by their recognition of a greater internal wealth (**Purgatory**, canto 19); and the usurers whose souls can never be redeemed (**Hell**, canto 17). To support his own economic views Ruskin borrowed quotations from the best of literature, most notably from Shakespeare's **The Merchant of Venice.** Comparing mercantile economics and political economics, for example, he alluded to a passage from the play in which Portia declares that

> instead of the law and quality of "merces,"/
> [follow] the greater law and quality of mercy,/
> which is not strained, but drops as the rain,/
> blessing him that gives and him that takes.
> (ch. IV, "Commerce"; XVII, 224){44}

To the list of thinkers whose writings defend the notions of political economy given in **Munera Pulveris**, he added Thomas Carlyle.

> In the scattered passages referring to this subject in three books of Carlyle's--**Sartor Resartus, Past and Present**, and the **Latter Day Pamphlets**,--all has been said that needs to be said, and far better than I shall ever say it again.

But, as a personal defense of his own writings in this sphere, he wrote that

> the habit of the public mind at present is to require everything to be uttered diffusely, loudly, and a hundred times over, before it will listen; and it has revolted against these papers of mine as if they contained things daring and new, when there is not one assertion in them of which the truth has not been for ages known to the wisest, and proclaimed by the most eloquent of men. (Appendix III; XVII, 287-88)

However, Ruskin criticized the classical writers for the enigmatic quality of their social and economic ideas, a criticism which applied to Charles Dickens as well. Displaying a personal regret, almost an irritated anger, with the classical writers who failed to simplify their social and political thought, Ruskin wrote:

> It is a strange habit of wise humanity to speak in enigmas only, so that the highest truths and usefullest laws must be hunted for through whole picture-galleries of dreams, which to the vulgar seem dreams only. Thus Homer, the Greek tragedians, Plato, Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare,

> and Goethe, have hidden all that is chiefly serviceable in their work, and in all the various literature they absorbed and re-embodied, under types which have rendered it quite useless to the multitude . . . . We shall perhaps now every day . . . feel ourselves more and more wonderstruck that men such as Homer and Dante (and, in an inferior sphere, Milton), not to speak of the great sculptors and painters of every age, have permitted themselves, though full of all nobleness and wisdom, to coin idle imaginations of the mysteries of eternity, and guide the faiths of the families of the earth by the courses of their own vague and visionary arts: while the indisputable truths of human life and duty, respecting which they all have but one voice, lie hidden behind these veils of phantasy, unsought, and often unsuspected. (XVII, 208-10){45}

Ruskin, in his political-economic trilogy, attempted to do what these members of "wise humanity" had failed to do. Understanding the relevance of classical thought to his own, but equally recognizing the weaknesses of his readers, he concluded his explication of Dante and Homer, at the end of Chapter Four, "Commerce":

> I think a great deal of [this explication] myself, now, [his editor, Froude, had complimented him on this passage earlier] and have put it all in large print accordingly, and should like to write more; but will on the contrary, self-denyingly, and in gratitude to any reader who has got through so much, end my chapter. (XVII, 216)

In the final two chapters, "Government" and "Mastership" which "examine first the principles of government in general, and then those of the government of the Poor by the Rich" (ch. V; XVII, 231), Ruskin developed his third major area of economic theory, the Study of Riches. This was the "province of moral science" which deals "with the due relations of men to each other in regard of material possessions" (ch. I; XVII, 153). Ruskin, however, did not restrict these final essays to economic relationships. In both papers he clearly indicated the way to the third major political-economic work, **Time and Tide** (1867). Ruskin began to outline how the principles of his political-economic thought, based on co-operation, honesty, and unselfishness, "would work out in laws, customs, and institutions" (E. T. Cook; XVII, lxxxiii).

In Chapter Five, "Government," Ruskin presented his prophetic ideas in his argument that there are three kinds of law working in any State. He defined the first two, "archaic" and "meristic," as laws of statute: archaic laws or laws of precept, outline what man is allowed to do; meristic, what he is allowed to possess. The third, "critic law," is the law of judgement, assigning reward or penalty to the observance or violation of statutes.

Meristic law is the law most relevant to the overall discussion of distribution and responsibility in Ruskin's political-economic thought. He asserted that it determined what every individual possessed by right and what every man *should* possess.

> The object of meristic law is not only to secure to every man his rightful share [of human wealth] (the share, that is, which he has worked for, produced, or received by gift from a rightful owner), but to enforce the due conditions of possession, as far as law may conveniently reach; for instance, that land shall not be wantonly

> allowed to run to waste, that streams shall not be poisoned by the persons through whose properties they pass. (XVII, 239-40)

Under meristic law he emphasized that the only rightful owner of great works of art, literary texts, and museum artifacts is the polis.

In the discussions of critic law and, by association, of archaic law, Ruskin elaborated on the responsible role of individual and government alike in dealing with crime. In their attempt to uphold archaic laws or laws of precept, Ruskin suggested that governments give attention to preventive measures. With respect to critic law, "two curious economical questions arise . . . the cost of crime [social and economic] and the cost of judgement [the system of the courts]" (XVII, 241). Quoting Plato's **Republic** (iii. 405 B), translated in its context by E. T. Cook, he asked:

> Does it not seem to you a scandalous thing, and a strong proof of defective education, to be obliged to use justice *imported from others*, in the character of lords and judges, *in consequence of the lack of it at home*? (XVII, 241)

Ruskin viewed crime as a symptom of social and economic problems and put the blame for crime on society as a whole rather than on the individual:

> The present insensibility of the upper classes of Europe to the surrounding aspects of suffering, uncleanness, and crime, binds them . . . into one responsibility with the sin . . . . The crimes daily recorded in the police-courts of London and Paris (and much more those which are *unrecorded)* are a disgrace to the whole body politic. (ch. V; XVII, 233)

As a way to counteract crime he claimed that a "statute may often be better enforced by mercy than severity" (XVII, 238).

Ruskin saw education as the tool most conducive to preventing crime but, he pointed out,

> there is a highly curious feeling in the English mind against educational law: we think no man's liberty should be interfered with till he has done irrevocable wrong. (ch. V; XVII, 238)

Consistent with his emphasis in **A Joy For Ever** and **Unto This Last**, is Ruskin's insistence in this fifth chapter of **Munera Pulveris** on an educational system to teach not only practical skills, but a just and caring way of life. Though right to demand education and to reason that only through education can many social problems and economic injustices be corrected, Ruskin naively believed education to be the panacea for all social, economic, and political ills. (Nowhere is this naivety more clearly seen than in **Time and Tide**, Letter XVI, "Education.") In the **Munera Pulveris** chapter on "Government," he concluded that

> the high ethical training of a nation . . . is irreconcilably inconsistent with filthy or mechanical employments,--with the desire of [sic] money,--and with mental states of anxiety, jealousy, or indifference to pain. (XVII, 233)

Ruskin's demands for government responsibility in areas of social and economic policy, including measures for the prevention of crime, for the provision of education, and for the improvement of living and working conditions represent methods to counteract the "indifference to pain," the indifference to the filth, poverty, and crime in England's streets.

As unorthodox as his views on economics and social policy were in the nineteenth century, so were his opinions on government and its responsibilities. Amidst the deafening debates about democracy, quietly sounded the Ruskinian perceptions that

> no form of government, provided it be a government at all, is, as such, to be either condemned or praised, or contested for in anywise, but by fools. But all forms of government are good just so far as they attain this one vital necessity of policy--*that the wise and kind, few or many, shall govern the unwise and unkind*; and they are evil so far as they miss of this, or reverse it. (ch. V; XVII, 248)

In **Time and Tide** this view is reinforced with a quotation from Pope's **Essay on Man**:

> For forms of government let fools contest;
> that which is best administered is best.
> (Epistle iii, 300)

Followed by his own explanation that:

> indeed, no form of government is of any use among bad men; and any form will work in the hands of the good; but the essence of all government among good men is this, that it is mainly occupied in the *production and recognition of human worth*. (**Time and Tide**, Letter XXIV; XVII, 446)

As per the reference text format that Ruskin established at the outset of **Munera Pulveris** he presented definitions of government and, what he concluded to be, its three pure forms: "monarchies, where the authority is vested in one person; oligarchies, when it is vested in a minority; or democracies, when vested in a majority."

These pure forms are "capable of infinite difference in character and use, receiving specific names according to their variations" (XVII, 245). Ruskin, sounding much like George Orwell in "Politics and the English Language" (1946), continued this line of thought, suggesting the impossibility of clearly understanding political terminology such as "oligarchy," "aristocracy," "monarchy," and "democracy":

> which names, being nowise agreed upon, nor consistently used, either in thought or writing, no man can at present tell, in speaking of any kind of government, whether he is understood; nor in hearing whether he understands. (ch. V; XVII, 245)

The purposes of government can be fulfilled only if the "wise and kind" govern. The difficulty, of course, is ensuring that those who govern are "wise and kind."

In his definitions of freedom and equality, which also appear in **A Joy For Ever**, Ruskin indicated the way to such a government. According to Ruskin, true liberty or freedom of action must follow the Greek understanding of liberty, which stresses man's "deliverance from the law of his own passions . . . . And it is only in such generosity that any man becomes capable of so governing others" (ch. IV; XVII, 228). In terms of a nation's laws, explained Ruskin, men must have two basic rights or freedoms:

> a man's claim not to be hindered from doing what he should; and his claim to be hindered from doing what he should not. (ch. V; XVII, 242)

As in **A Joy For Ever**, Ruskin's criticisms of notions of equality continue to be bitter here and in the letters of **Time and Tide** and **Fors Clavigera**. Men must recognize and accept their own strengths and weaknesses and those of people around them; only in such recognition is there hope of having a government by the "wise and kind."

> In the mode of such discernment consists the real "constitution" of the state, more than in the titles or offices of the discerned person; for it is in no matter, save in degree of mischief, to what office a man is appointed if he cannot fulfil it. (ch. V; XVII, 244)

Ruskin believed that because of men's inequalities a true government cannot be achieved by an electoral system based on universal *equal* suffrage. Though he offered some advice on how to decide what weight should be given to an individual's vote (education, experience, wealth, criminal record, and age were some of the criteria he considered), he pointed out that the chapters in **Munera Pulveris** are "concerned as yet with definitions only, and statements of first principles" (ch. V; XVII, 254). He pursued these ideas of freedom and equality and their relationship to government in **Time and Tide**; however, Ruskin never devised a workable or credible system for choosing the best means of government. The dangers implicit in his views of inequality and freedom lead more easily to government by the dishonest and uncaring than to government by "the wise and kind." Nevertheless, whatever the form and however chosen, the purpose of government must be

> the determination, by living authority, of the national conduct to be observed under existing circumstances; and the modification or enlargement, obligation or enforcement, of the code of national law according to . . . needs or purposes. (ch. V; XVII, 244)

In the first chapter of **Munera Pulveris**, Ruskin had conceded that the world's wealth will never be distributed equally; on the contrary,

> according to the various industry, capacity, good fortune, and desires of men, they obtain greater or smaller share of, and claim upon, the wealth of the world . . . . [However,] the inequalities between these shares always in some degree just and necessary, may be either restrained by law or circumstance within certain limits; or may increase indefinitely. (ch. I; XVII, 160)

Ruskin's political economy strongly recommends "restraint by law." Respecting riches, the role of the economist is to inquire "into the advisable modes of their collection [and] into the advisable modes of their administration" (XVII, 160), and the role of government is to ensure that those modes are employed; the role of the individual is to avert, in a self-disciplined way, the extreme inequalities in wealth. The discussions of collection and administration of riches in Chapter One, of the forms and functions of government in Chapter Five, and of the responsibility of the rich for the poor in the final chapter, underline Ruskin's definition of *political* economy, the economy of the polis or state rather than that of the individual.

Ruskin was not a socialist. For reasons he considered just, he argued that wealth will never be distributed equally. In the preface to **Munera Pulveris**, written nine years later in 1872, Ruskin reaffirmed his disagreement with socialism. Though the existing laws of distribution of wealth,

> laws which ordinary economists assume to be inviolable, and which ordinary socialists imagine to be on the eve of total abrogation . . . . are unjust, because the motives which provoke to its attainment are impure; . . . no socialism can effect their abrogation, unless it can abrogate also covetousness and pride . . . . Extremes of luxury may be forbidden, and agony of penury relieved; but nature intends, and the utmost efforts of socialism will not hinder the fulfilment of her intention, that a provident person shall always be richer than a spend thrift; and an ingenious one more comfortable than a fool. (XVII, 144)

In a lengthy footnote to his discussion of property and wealth in **Unto This Last**, Ruskin provided an explanation of the difference between socialism and his own economics:

> I am not taking up, nor countenancing one whit, the common socialist idea of division of property [note **Unto**; XVII, 74 and **Munera**; XVII, 144]: division of property is its destruction; and with it the destruction of all hope, all industry, and all justice: it is simply chaos--a chaos towards which the believers in modern political economy are fast tending, and from which I am striving to save them. The rich man does not keep back meat from the poor by retaining his riches; but by basely using them. Riches are a form of strength; and a strong man does not injure others by keeping his strength, but by using it injuriously. The socialist, seeing a strong man oppress a weak one, cries out--"Break the strong man's arms;" but I say, "Teach him to use them to better purpose." The fortitude and intelligence which acquire riches are intended, by the Giver of both, not to scatter, nor to give away, but to employ those riches in the service of mankind; in other words, in the redemption of the erring and aid of the weak--that is to say, there is first to be the work to gain money; then the Sabbath of use for it--the Sabbath, whose law is, not to

> lose life, but to save. It is continually the fault or the folly of the poor that they are poor, as it is usually a child's fault if it falls into a pond, and a cripple's weakness that slips at a crossing; nevertheless, most passers-by would pull the child out, or help up the cripple. Put it at the worst, that all the poor of the world are but disobedient children, or careless cripples, and that all rich people are wise and strong, and you will see at once that neither is the socialist right in desiring to make everybody poor, powerless, and foolish as he is himself, nor the rich man right in leaving the children in the mire. (XVII, 106-07)

The distribution of wealth is at the heart of Ruskin's discussions of the collection, administration, and proper governing of a country's riches. Of collection (called accumulation in **A Joy For Ever)** Ruskin restated that the first of all inquiries into a nation's wealth is not how much it has but who holds the wealth and for what reasons. "Thus, if the king alone be rich--suppose Croesus or Mausolus--are the Lydians or Carians therefore a rich nation? Or if a few slave-masters are rich, and the nation is otherwise composed of slaves, is it to be called a rich nation?" (ch. I; XVII, 160-61)

Having established who holds a country's riches and who has the larger share of the nation's wealth, the economist, like the government, must educate the rich as to their powers of Selection, Direction, and Provision. Ruskin explained that the power of Selection is related to things which are in limited supply. The richest person has the power to decide to whom such things will belong. On such decision depends the plea, given under Meristic

Law, that

> there ought to be free libraries in every quarter of London . . . . so also free educational museums . . . rich in contents both of art and natural history. (ch. V; XVII, 240)

Provision, the third listed power of the rich, is also discussed under Meristic Law in Chapter Five, "Government." It requires that those in control of the nation's wealth keep an eye on the future by making provision for the generations in their handling of the country's riches, whether those riches be the art of men or the natural resources of the earth. Of "Direction," the authority of the rich over the labour of the poor, Ruskin outlined the employers' responsibility for their employees' physical, mental, and spiritual health. This theme of responsibility for the poor appears throughout the body of Ruskin's social texts and, in **Munera Pulveris**, receives concentrated attention in the sixth chapter, "Masterships." In his comments on Riches, Ruskin concluded that

> The wholesome action of riches in these three functions will depend (it appears) on the Wisdom, Justice, and Farsightedness of the holders.

Calling to mind the difficulty of ensuring that those in a position to govern are "wise and kind," the obvious problem here remains that

> it is by no means to be assumed that persons primarily rich, must therefore be just and wise. (XVII, 162)

If economic inequalities must exist, the role of government must be "to arrange matters, as that persons primarily just and wise, . . . be rich" (XVII, 162) or that the rich be motivated by education and individual appeal to be just and wise. In the last two chapters of **Munera Pulveris**, "Government" and "Mastership," and in the letters of **Time and Tide** Ruskin suggested ways to ensure that wisdom, justice, and farsightedness influence economic decisions, thus ensuring a "common wealth."

In the final chapter Ruskin warned against an economic system which oppresses the poor, and he presented last appeals for a change of attitude in viewing economic, and therefore, social inequalities. With one eye on the Continent and the other on North America he wrote:

> if the rich strive always to obtain more power over the poor, instead of to raise them--and if, on the other hand, the poor become continually more vicious and numerous, through neglect and oppression,--though the **range** of the power of the rich increases, its **tenure** becomes less secure; until, at last, the measure of inequity being full, revolution, civil war, or the subjection of the state to a healthier or stronger one, closes the moral corruption, and industrial disease. (ch. VI; XVII, 264)

Ruskin's hope rested with the third possibility, of a healthier, stronger state, which would put an end to moral corruption and industrial disease. According to his economic vision, presented in **Munera Pulveris** and **Unto This Last**,{46} the possibility of a healthier, stronger state depends on a changed view of wealth, and on its voluntary as well as legislated redistribution. Though his economics do not promise immediate monetary returns to the individual he assured his readers that his economics

> will pay; not at first in currency, but in that which is the end and the source of currency,--in life; (and in currency richly afterwards). It will pay in that which is more than life,--in light, whose true price has not yet been reckoned in any currency, and yet into the image of which, all wealth, one way or other, must be cast. (ch. VI; XVII, 282)

Ruskin was here, as in **Unto This Last** and **A Joy For Ever**, fully aware of the radical and idealistic character of his economic perceptions. On suggesting that the nation's capitalists consider investing their money for the betterment of life instead of investing merely for the capital gains from interest he added:

> "Impossible, absurd, Utopian!" exclaim nine-tenths of the few readers whom these words may find.
>
> No, good reader, **this** is not Utopian: but I will tell you what would have seemed, if we had not seen it, Utopian on the side of evil instead of good; that ever men should have come to value their money so much more than their lives . . . ; if you ask them, for their country's sake to spend a hundred pounds without security of getting back a hundred-and-five, they will laugh in your face. (ch. VI; XVII, 270-71)

His seemingly utopian ideas of economics and, further, of social policy and government appear everywhere in the pages of the third social text, **Time and Tide**.

Between the completion of the final chapter of **Munera Pulveris** and the opening letter of **Time and Tide**, two incidents in particular--one biographical, the other historical--influenced the progress of Ruskin's social criticism. The first was his father's death in 1864; the second, the agitation for Parlimentary reform in 1866 and

1867. His father's death freed him of the contraints and guilt placed by paternal expectations and differences of opinion. In a biographical overview of this point in Ruskin's career, E. T. Cook wrote:

> Now that his father was no longer at his side, Ruskin plunged with constant ardour into the fray. The almost single-handed contest which he waged at this time with the accepted religion in economics is one of the most spirited incidents in the history of such disputes, and his frequent letters to the newspapers [1863-68] did a great deal to call attention to his views. (XVII, lxxvii-lxxviii)

In addition, the fortune his father left him (land, houses, and 157,000 pounds) gave Ruskin a greater opportunity to contribute to practical projects which supported his views. For example, he aided Miss Octavia Hill, a pioneer in improving nineteenth-century urban conditions and in bettering conditions for tenants. He entrusted to her stewardship tenements left him in his father's will and purchased other leasehold property for the same purpose. Ruskin, describing his works with Octavia Hill in **Time and Tide**, Letter XIII, called the housing improvements that they effected "merely an example of what might be done by firm State action in such matters" (XVII, 437). John A. Hobson pointed out that "almost the whole of [Ruskin's inheritance] had been expended by 1877" on aid to Octavia Hill as well as to other social projects. Hobson added that "no man of means ever treated his money more in the spirit of public trust."{47} In such a spirit Ruskin devoted the closing pages of **Fors Clavigera**, Letter 76, "to declare what [he had done] with a hundred and fifty-seven thousand pounds; and certain houses and lands" (XXIX, 99). Nearing the end of the letter, following his itemized account, he added:

> be assured that my spending, whether foolish or wise, has not been the wanton lavishness of a man who could not restrain his desires; but the deliberate distribution, as I thought best, of the wealth I had received as a trust, while I yet lived, and had power over it. For what has been consumed by swindlers, your modern principles of trade are answerable; for the rest, none even of that confessed to have been given in the partiality of affection, has been bestowed but in real self-denial. (XXIX, 104)

E. T. Cook mentioned, as other examples of Ruskin's practical work in social reform, his "experiments in the reclamation of land, in village industries, in farming, in model tea-shops, in the purification of streams, in street-cleaning , [and] in road-making" (XVII, cx).{48} The practical work for Ruskin's St. George's Guild, though not begun until 1871 with his personal contribution of one thousand pounds, was prepared for in **Time and Tide** (1867). In Letter 58 of **Fors Clavigera** he wrote that the principles upon which the Guild was founded were contained in the letters of **Time and Tide**, especially letters XV, XVI, XX, XXII, and XXIII. These principles were later expanded in the **Fors** letters. In "Additional Passages Relating to St. George's Guild" (1877), Ruskin described the Guild as involving

> the purchase of land in healthy districts, and the employment of labourers in that land under the carefullest supervision, and with every

> proper means of mental instruction.
> (XXX, 153){49}

The Guild represents Ruskin's attempt at creating a *utopian* form of life--impossible simply by definition. The failure of the Guild project and the lack of support for it were for Ruskin great disappointments and directly contributed to his extreme bouts of depression in the late seventies and in the eighties. Such disappointment is understandable in view of his constant desire to effect practical change, a desire which is always evident in his writings as well as in his fostering of actual social experiments; as Hobson asserted

> the full pressure of his desire to do "something practical," and especially to get into close communion with intelligent working men, is seen in the series of letters addressed to a working cork-cutter in Sunderland, first published in the early months of 1867 in the **Manchester Examiner** and the **Leeds Mercury**, and collected shortly afterwards in the volume entitled "Time and Tide by Weare and Tyne."{50}

Adding to the momentum of social ideas and projects following the death of Ruskin's father was the mounting activity for reform, culminating in the Reform Bill introduced by Lord Derby's government with Disraeli as leader of the House of Commons, in February, 1867. "Ruskin did not oppose Reform itself," explained E. T. Cook, "but saw that it was no panacea. Social justice was more important than electoral redistribution" (XVII, lxxx). Ruskin saw the social and economic faults of his day as far beyond the reach of political reform alone. As expressed in the earlier social texts, living and working conditions will improve only with changes in attitudes about commerce, about wealth, and about values. Foreshadowing the title of this third major social work is the prophecy in **Munera Pulveris** that

> it will be discovered, in due course of tide and time (XVII, 218)

that all human interactions must be based on honesty and co-operation. The second part of the title **(Time and Tide by Weare and Tyne)** refers to the "English streams of Weare and Tyne" which Ruskin saw as symbols for the life-taking quality of the popular social and economic thought. Describing the "commercial society" of Zurich, Switzerland, he wrote:

> The town itself shows the most gratifying signs of progress in all the modern arts and sciences of life. It is nearly as black as Newcastle . . .[,] fouls the stream of the Limmat as soon as it issues from the lake, so that you might even venture to compare the formerly simple and innocent Swiss river (I remember it thirty years ago--a current of pale green crystal) with the highly educated English streams of Weare or Tyne.{51}

In the preface to **Time and Tide**, Ruskin speculated that though the electoral reforms would give the people more influence in Parliament, that influence would not improve their lives until they knew what to ask for. In this third major work, Ruskin attempted to guide the working men of England in making the wisest demands of their government. Discussing the ideas of **Time and Tide** in the preface he wrote that these

> things are what it seems to me you should ask for, and, moreover, strive for with your heart and might. (XVII, 313)

Far less kindly, he retorted, in Letter III, "Legislation":

> your voices are not worth a rat's squeak, either in Parliament or out of it, till you have some ideas to utter. (XVII, 326)

Though Ruskin never wrote the economic treatise for which **Munera Pulveris** was to be the preface, he managed to record numerous ideas related to these first principles of economics and to outline related political and social policies by choosing a less restrictive format in this third major social text. As its complete title indicates--**Time and Tide, by Weare and Tyne. Twenty-five Letters to a Working Man ofSunderland on the Laws of Work**--Ruskin replaced the essay format of **Unto This Last** and the chapter divisions following the proposed economic treatise of **Munera Pulveris** with letters. He began Letter I, "Two kinds of Co-operation," with the explanation that

> there are several points in these books of mine [on political economy] which I intended to add notes to, and it seems little likely I shall get that soon done. So I think the best way of making up for the want of these is to write you a few simple letters. (XVII, 315)

The epistolary form allowed Ruskin to move from one subject to another. While connected in their support for his social and economic philosophy, the letters follow no particular pattern. However, Ruskin gave them a singleness of purpose, to provide direction for the rising working class. And he attained thematic unity by weaving common threads of thought throughout the entire twenty-five, forming an outline of his ideal Commonwealth. As he explained in the title, "the laws of work" or, as he pointed out in the preface, laws "bearing upon honesty of work and honesty of exchange" establish a central unifying theme; in the letters Ruskin expanded the relationship between social justice and work. But he touched on many subjects and included numerous digressions in them. In 1872 he added titles and sub-titles to the letters to designate specific topics (XVII, 309-11) in order to "give the reader some clue to the general aim of necessarily desultory discussion" (XVII, 314).

Though in terms of its aims and the three-fold purpose in Ruskin's criticism **Time and Tide** is a logical sequel to **Unto This Last** and **Munera Pulveris**, it attaches itself, as well, to the autobiographical impulses of **Fors Clavigera** and **Praeterita**. John D. Rosenberg suggested that **Time and Tide**

> is less a sequel to **Unto This Last** than a prelude to his masterwork of the 1870's, **Fors Clavigera.** In it Ruskin learned to articulate the drama of his own bafflement . . . subtly and movingly. He also evolved a style--lightly ironic, allusive, richer always in implication than in statement--ideally capable of conveying great grief with great felicity.{52}

In **Fors Clavigera. Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain** (1871-1884), Ruskin maintained the objectives of and followed the same methods used in the letters of **Time and Tide**, taking up one subject, then another, and unifying the whole thematically; both works are, of course, imbued with Ruskinian social and economic philosophy. He indicated the thematic connection between the two works in his preface to **Time and Tide**:

> The letters now published relate only to one division of the laws which I desired to recommend to the consideration of our operations,--those, namely, bearing upon honesty of work, and honesty of exchange. I hope in the course of next year that I may be able to complete the second part of the series, (I could not; but **Fors Clavigera** is now (1872) answering the same end) which will relate to the possible comforts and wholesome laws, of familiar household life, and the share which a labouring nation may attain in the skill, and the treasures, of the highest arts.
> (XVII, 313)

Though in the letters of both **Time and Tide** and **Fors Clavigera** Ruskin revealed autobiographical expressions of hope and, increasingly, of grief and cynicism, it is a mistake to minimize the social criticism in these works. As Hobson explained, in both works Ruskin described

> those changes necessary to establish a sound society upon right industrial and political principles. Certain axioms of social justice relating to work and property underlie his proposals. Every man must do the work which he can do best, and in the best way, for the common good and not for individual profit.{53}

Time and Tide, in particular, is based on this principle of work throughout the series of twenty-five letters.

The autobiographical studies by R. H. Wilenski and John D. Rosenberg (**John Ruskin: An Introduction to Further Study of His Life and Work** (1933) and **The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin's Genius** (1961)) have maligned the social criticism of Ruskin's **Time and Tide.** Each author focused on Ruskin's relationship with Rose La Touche and on his deteriorating state of physical and mental health in the eighteen-sixties and seventies when examining this work. There is no doubt that Rose La Touche's refusal to marry Ruskin in 1866 and her increasing independence of thought (no longer the faithful follower of all that Ruskin professed) affected his personal life. And, one does find evidences of his feelings for Rose in his less formal works, including **Time and Tide.**{54} Also, one cannot argue against the fact that Ruskin was experiencing poor health while writing this work, and that both his physical weakness and his confessed bouts of depression (in the diaries and letters especially) projected his eventual collapse and insanity fifteen years later. But to use either of these biographical facts as argument against the prominence and relevance of his social criticism in **Time and Tide** is invalid.

Rosenberg unconvincingly suggested that the social criticism of **Time and Tide** is not "the heart of the book," but that the twenty-five letters stand more correctly as "a missing page from Ruskin's 'book of pain;'" instead, argued Rosenburg, its autobiographical digressions form the work's heart.{55} Rosenberg linked the few passages he examined to what he viewed as Ruskin's sexual problems. Both Rosenberg and Wilenski analyzed Letters V and VI, connecting Ruskin's criticisms of the "dancing girls" at the Covent Garden Pantomime and "the Japanese Jugglers" with his inner sexual fears. According to Rosenberg:

> Overtly, Ruskin's digression on the cigar-smoking girls is an indictment of the perversity of British taste. But its underlying energy springs from his self-disgust at his own perversity, his horrified fascination at child-like innocence.{56}

The exploitive language (perversity, horrified fascination) is not uncommon to Wilenski's and Rosenberg's discussions. This passage which each critic used as his primary evidence for Ruskin's obsession with Rose La Touche and for his sexual incapabilities occurs in letter V, "The Corruption of Modern Pleasure." Ruskin saw a reflection of the degenerating tastes of Britain in the audience's applause for a modern performance of "Ali Babba and the Forty Thieves." An eight year old dancer's faultless pas-de-deux received no "sign of praise" from "the vast theatre, full of English fathers and mothers and children." The British public, however, gave a round of applause when the forty thieves, "time hanging heavy on their hands, arms, and legs . . . proceeded to light forty cigars" (**TT** V; XVII, 337-38). Ruskin, understandably, was upset that a cheap attention-getting and time-filling device received more applause than the flawless ballet number of a young performer on stage. Against the assessments made by Wilenski and Rosenberg, I contend that throughout **Time and Tide**, Ruskin was foremost a critic of his society.

The letters of **Time and Tide**, though written for the benefit of the working class in general, were sent personally to Thomas Dixon of Sunderland (1831-80), who significantly represented the kind of working man Ruskin "strove to influence and create." E. T. Cook described him as

> an unostentatious, practical philanthropist [whose] secret pecuniary benefactions were not only large in proportion to his means, but, what was of far more permanent good service to humanity, he never lost an opportunity of inducing the young persons who frequented his shop or visited his house to become keen art students, judicious book-keepers, and discriminative, earnest readers. Young men and women, by dozens, owe to him the first impulse they got to cultivate something higher than either mere amusement or sordid money-making . . . . He took an active part in all local efforts for the establishment of public reading-rooms, art galleries, cooperative stores, and mechanics' institutes. He used to correspond with eminent men [Carlyle, Browning, W. M. Rossetti, and, of course, Ruskin], and those who made his acquaintance soon became his friends . . . .
>
> A working man of this kind was a man after Ruskin's heart. He gave to Dixon his warm friendship, and Dixon to him a wholehearted admiration. Dixon had asked for copies of Ruskin's writings on Political Economy. The inquiry, coming from a man representative of the highest type of the working classes, suggested to Ruskin to carry a little further the work which had been suspended in 1863. (XVII, lxxviii-lxxix)

The attempt to "create" other working men like Thomas Dixon, then, is the overall aim of the **Twenty-five Letters to a Working Man of Sunderland**. However, Ruskin aimed three of the final letters (XXI, XXII, XXIII) at the upper classes. By the time these were written the decision had been made to publish the series. Continuing to send them to Dixon, he explained at the beginning of Letter XXII, "The Master":

> In passing now to the statement of conditions affecting the interests of the upper classes, I would rather have addressed these closing letters to one of themselves than to you, for it is with their own faults and needs that each class is primarily concerned. As, however, unless I kept the letters private, this change of their address would be but a matter of courtesy and form, not of any true prudential use; and as besides I am now no more inclined to reticence--prudent or otherwise; but desire only to state the facts of our national economy as clearly and completely as may be, I pursue the subject without respect of persons. (XVII, 429)

Though Dixon was the first recipient of the letters, Ruskin urged him to share their contents. In the first letter he wrote:

> you can read [them] to other people, or send [them] to be printed, if you like, in any of your journals where you think they may be useful. (**TT** I; XVII, 315)

Almost immediately the letters were published in the **Leeds Mercury** and the **Manchester Examiner and Times**. To further encourage their distribution, Ruskin revised the letters, adding a preface and appendices for publication in book form later that year.{57} The furtherence of his social criticism is throughout the primary aim of **Time and Tide**, and its objective remains consistent with the earlier works: "the *production and recognition of human worth*" (**TT** XXIV; XVII, 446). Here again is the axiom upon which the whole of Ruskin's social vision rests.

Ruskin's advice to Thomas Dixon and other working men of England reiterates the importance of co-operation, honesty, and justice in all the workings of society. The series opens with the letter entitled "Co-operation," in which Ruskin discussed not only co-operation between individuals and workers but between governments and nations (XVII, 317). He began with his often repeated condemnation of competition (XVII, 317) and, as in **Unto This Last** and **Munera Pulveris**, outlined the consequent social changes once co-operation replaced competition as the guiding principle of commerce:

> a somewhat larger income will be in co-operative firms secured to the subordinates, by the diminution of the income of the chief. And the general tendency of such a system is to increase the facilities of advancement among the subordinates; to stimulate their ambition; to enable them to lay by, if they are provident, more ample and more early provision for declining years; and to form in the end a vast class of persons wholly different from the existing operative:--members of society, possessing each a moderate competence; able to procure, therefore, not indeed many of the luxuries, but all the comforts of life; and to devote some leisure to the attainments of liberal education, and to the other objects of free life. (XVII, 316-17)

Ruskin's suggestion for a trade guild system for commercial dealings is an application of his principle of co-operation (**TT** XIV).

As for his ideas about honesty, in Letter VIII, "Things Written," Ruskin reminded his readers that

> the essential difference between the political economy I am trying to teach, and the popular

> science, is that mine is based on *presumably attainable honesty* in men, a conceivable respect in them for the interests of others, while the popular science founds itself wholly on their supposed constant regard for their own. (XVII, 347)

Ruskin defined honesty in children as a primary goal of education, and honesty in social policy as a primary goal of government.

> If you ask why you are to be honest--you are in the question itself, dishonoured. "Because you are a man," is the only answer. (XVII, 348)

Emphasizing the importance of honesty in all social and economic dealings, Ruskin wrote that the first laws that must be enforced in his commonwealth are those "directed to the prevention of all kinds of thieving . . . [especially] the making and selling of bad goods." There must be stern penalty "for proved adulteration or dishonest manufacture of article [sic]" (**TT** XIV; XVII, 383-84). Near the end of **Time and Tide**, he stressed the relationship between honesty and commerce and the overall quality of the commonwealth:

> The laws you make regarding methods of labour, or to secure the genuiness of things produced by it, affect the entire moral state of the nation, and all possibility of human happiness for them [sic]. (**TT** XXII; XVII, 433)

As throughout his social writings, he connected "commercial dishonesties [with] social cruelties;" and, therefore, preliminary to all others and necessary above all others, laws in a "true Working Men's Parliament must be ordained in defence of Honesty" (**TT** XI; XVII, 369).

Besides laws to defend honesty, Ruskin asserted that "the enforcement of justice, in temper and in act, is the first of political requirements" (TT XII; XVII, 371). For the basic principle of his social, political, and economic advice, he cited the Bible:

> that where truth, temperance, and equity have been preserved, all strength, and peace, and joy have been preserved also;--that where lying, lasciviousness, and covetousness have been practised, there has followed an infallible, and, for centuries, irrecoverable ruin. (TT VIII; XVII, 351)

He advised, then, that the working men of England infuse their individual lives--personal and working--with a policy of co-operation, honesty, and justice, and that they demand the same of their government; that government and social policy follow the tenets of co-operation, honesty, and justice. "Wholesome honesty [must be] the foundation of all things" before parliament will be able to affect other legislative changes to check the country's social ills (TT III; XVII, 328).

Ruskin also based his advice to Dixon and England's working men on the same concepts of freedom and equality discussed in the earlier social and economic texts. The need for authority in government, the necessity of restraint as well as privilege in law, and the recognition of personal weaknesses as well as strengths all appear again in discussions about social and political change. In Letter XII, "Dictatorship. The Necessity of Imperative Law to the Prosperity of States," Ruskin closely examined both the necessity of privilege and of restraint in any society: laws must protect all men. Looking back some fourteen years to the **Stones of Venice**, Ruskin wrote that his readers will find

> at the close of it, this sentence, of which I solemnly now avouch (in thankfulness that I was permitted to write it), every word; "Finally, I hold it for indisputable, that the first duty of a State is to see that every child born therein shall be well housed, clothed, fed, and educated, till it attain years of discretion. But in order to the effecting this the Government must have an authority over the people of which we now do not so much as dream." **(TT** XIII; XVII, 377)

He demanded that the working men of England be willing to give up the personal freedoms of profit for the political authority of distribution. Ruskin stressed that personal goals and freedoms are inextricably bound to co-operation and the instinct for truth and justice **(TT** X; XVII, 363-65). And, as he instructed in Letter II, "Contentment," the working men of England must not aspire to positions in life for which they are not fit. Continuing the line of thought started in **A Joy For Ever** and repeated in **Unto This Last** and **Munera Pulveris**, in the letters of **Time and Tide** Ruskin advised Dixon and other workers to recognize, accept, and develop their own abilities and always to produce honest and good work.

At the very core of Ruskin's designs for social improvement is an educational system free, compulsory, liberal, and technical. He saw government's primary means of righting social and economic inequalities and injustices in the implementation of such an educational policy. Though Ruskin included discussions and descriptions of education throughout his social texts,{58} he gave a brief but concentrated explanation of the functions and form of a national education policy in Letter XVI, "Education. Of Public Education irrespective of Class-distinction. It consists essentially in giving Habits of Mercy and Habits of Truth. (Gentleness and Justice)." Education as he described it in the pages of **Time and Tide** includes the "Laws of Health, and exercises enjoined by them" (XVII, 397), the mental graces of "Reverence and Compassion" (XVII, 398-99), and the teaching of "truth of spirit and word, of thought and sight" (XVII, 399-400), thus recalling his earlier comment that "to make your children *capable of honesty* is the beginning of education" (**TT** VIII; XVII, 348). Ruskin listed the principle subjects of education as language, history, natural science, and mathematics (XVII, 400).

In addition to covering particular subject areas, Ruskin explained that education must take into account the local differences and projected vocations of students (XVII, 400). As in **Unto This Last**, here Ruskin advised that "trial schools" play a key role in helping students discover their individual aptitudes and weaknesses. In the second letter, "Contentment," he emphasized that

> effort be made to discover, in the course of their early training, for what services the youths of a nation are individually qualified;

> . . . [and] care taken to place those who have unquestionably proved their fitness for certain functions, in the offices they could best fulfil. (TT II; XVII, 320)

He argued that education develop the natural capacities rather than encourage "thoughts of any great future advance in social life" (TT XXV; XVII, 457), and that, rather than guaranteeing a rise in social status, education be used to improve the quality of life--physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. "False education is a delightful thing, and warms you, and makes you every day think more of yourself" (TT XXV; XVII, 457). True education, in contrast, indicates personal weaknesses as well as strengths, calls attention to "the greater men" around us; teaches that there are others who are superior and inferior to us by direct comparison of specific talents (TT XXV; XVII, 457-58). This idea of individual differences and the need to recognize them is of the greatest importance in Ruskin's vision of an ideal commonwealth, and is one of the last ideas stressed in the concluding letter of **Time and Tide**, "Hyssop. Of inevitable Distinction of Rank, and necessary Submission to Authority."

Ruskin was quite aware of the arguments against universal education, especially those which suggested that the working classes would be discontented once they were introduced to the larger world of reading, writing, philosophy, music, and so on. Without denying the possibility of causing feelings of discontent, especially in the case of filling "servile positions" he was not swayed from his view that education is every man's right. Using an ironic persona, Ruskin described the alternative to mass education:

> I am heartily willing, as well as anxious, to hear you develop your own scheme of operative education . . . . You imply that a certain portion of mankind must be employed in degrading work; and that, to fit them for this work, it is necessary to limit their knowledge, their active powers, and their enjoyments, from childhood upwards, so that they may not be able to conceive of any state better than the one they were born in, nor possess any knowledge or acquirements inconsistent with the coarseness, or disturbing the monotony, of their vulgar occupation. And by their labour in this contracted state of mind, we superior beings are to be maintained . . . .
>
> Mind, I do not say that this is *not* the right state of things. Only, if it be, you need not be so over-particular about the slave-trade, it seems to me . . . . It does not appear to me at all a profound state of slavery to be whipped into doing a piece of low work that I don't like; but it is a very profound state of slavery to be kept, myself, low in the forehead, that I may not dislike my low work. (TT XVIII; XVII, 403)

Rather than deny education to the masses, Ruskin's commonwealth would attempt to diminish degrading work and to raise the character of servile work through a change in attitude. Manual work would be shared by members of all classes and the most servile work and most difficult manual labour given to criminals.

In Letter XXI, "Gentillesse," Ruskin discussed what constitutes degrading work, how to eliminate degrading work, and how to change the character of necessary servile employment. Manual work, he wrote, is "refreshing, wholesome, and necessary in measure" (XVII, 423). Total manual work, however, is degrading to human beings. He suggested, therefore, that we live "with as few wants as possible, and . . . waste nothing" that demands manual labour for its production (XVII, 424). Further, wrote Ruskin,

> What food, and clothes, and lodging, you honestly need, for your health and peace, you may righteously take. See that you take the plainest you can serve yourself with--that you waste or wear nothing vainly--and that you employ no man in furnishing you with any useless luxury.
>
> That is the first lesson of Christian --or human-- economy; and depend on it, my friend, it is a sound one, and has every voice and vote of the spirits of Heaven and earth to back it, whatever views the Manchester men, or any other manner of men, may take respecting "demand and supply." Demand what you deserve, and you shall be supplied with it, for your good. Demand what you do *not* deserve, and you shall be supplied with something which you have not demanded. (XVII, 424-25)

All members of a society "from the King's son downwards,--should learn to do something finely and thoroughly with his hand" (XVII, 426). The result would be that all members of society would share the necessary manual labour. These ideas appear in Chapter Five of **Munera Pulveris** as well (XVII, 234). Ruskin more specifically discussed the relationship between education and "servile work" in **Time and Tide**, Letters XVII and XVIII: "Difficulties. The Relation of Education to Position in Life" (XVII, 402-04); and "Humility. The Harmful Effects of Servile Employments" (XVII, 405-09).

Ruskin argued that education, rather than causing social and economic problems, was the sole means by which to eradicate them within society. For example, as in the earlier social texts, Ruskin emphasized once again the relationship between education and the prevention of crime:

> Crime can only be truly hindered by letting no man grow up a criminal . . . . Crime, small and great, can only be truly stayed by education--not the education of the intellect only . . .; but education of the heart. (TT XV; XVII, 392-93)

Of all of his ideas, his views on education have at the same time proven to be the most realistic and most utopian. Though he was quite correct in viewing education as the right of all men, he imagined that the powers of universal education would prove strong enough to cure all social ills, even including war between nations. In Letter XXIV, "The Rod and the Honeycomb," he wrote that "the soldier's office . . . is an office which --Utopian as you may think the saying-- will soon now be extinct . . . . National education will [bring peace], and that is soon coming" (XVII, 447-48). National education was "soon coming;" peace, unfortunately, has never arrived.

Though Ruskin viewed education as a kind of panacea for society's ills, as a way of thwarting the waste of human potential, he stressed two kinds of change as necessary for economic and social improvement--voluntary change and legislated change. According to Ruskin's plan for social improvement, voluntary or personal change is of the highest importance. Ruskin began Letter XXIII, "Landmarks," by asserting the practicability of securing that kind of change:

> Whatever I have hitherto urged upon you, it is in the power of all men quietly to promote, and finally to secure, by the patient resolution of personal conduct. (TT XXIII; XVII, 436)

Legislative change, dependent on state regulations and government authority, must be aimed at "the production and recognition of human worth" (TT XXIV; XVII, 446). The voluntary establishment of Trade Guilds and the legislated use of Overseers, discussed in Letters XIV and XIII respectively, are examples of these two kinds of change.

Ruskin's idea of trade guilds, advanced in the opening letter on co-operation, suggests that members of the same trade "form one society, selling to the public under a common law of severe penalty for unjust dealing, and at an established price." Members of a guild must co-operate with one another rather than compete. Ruskin was quite right in his speculation that

> The magnitude of the social change hereby involved, and the consequent differences in the moral relations between individuals, have not as yet been thought of,--much less estimated, by any of your writers on commercial subjects. (TT I; XVII, 317)

Ruskin described trade guilds as voluntary organizations, not monopolies. He gave two reasons for allowing outside competition--the first, that "it is always necessary, in enacting strict law, to leave some safety valve for outlet of irrepressible vice" (TT XIV; XVII, 385). Hobson called this point "a wise and far-reaching thought, which advocates of all forms of State Coercion would do well to ponder."{59} The second reason for allowing competition outside the strictness of the guild is to allow for "the stimulus of such erratic external ingenuity as cannot be tested by law, or would be hindered from its full exercise by the dread of it" (XVII, 385). The guilds' primary function would be to fix just standards, prices, and wages and to limit profits. Trading accounts would be made public and a fund kept for apprenticeships and emergencies. Articles sold by guilds would be warranted (TT XIV; XVII, 383-87). Finally, because

> a great deal of the vulgarity, and nearly all the vice, of retail commerce, involving the degradation of persons occupied in it, depends simply on the fact that their minds are always occupied by the vital . . . question of profits I should at once put an end to this source of baseness by making all retail dealers merely salaried officers in the employ of the trade guilds. (TT XXI; XVII, 427)

The guilds would replace the capitalist employer and the middlemen, thus redirecting profits. They would protect the public from "Sham products," and watch over the needs of guild members.

In his system of overseers, too, Ruskin proposed a watch on the needs of citizens within society. The overseers would be a legislated body of government officers, rather than a voluntary organization. Both suggestions--trade guilds and legislated overseers--indicate Ruskin's attempts to find a way to administer social aid. The system of overseers, much criticized for its seeming breach of freedom and privacy, is described in Letter XIII, "Episcopacy and Dukedom". Over every one hundred families "more or less",

> there should be appointed an overseer, or bishop, to render account, to the State, of the life of every individual in those families . . . : so that it may be impossible for any person, however humble, to suffer from unknown want, or live in unrecognized crime;--such help and observance being rendered without officiousness either of interference or inquisition (the limits of both being determined by national law), but with the patient and gentle watchfulness which true Christian pastors now exercise over their flocks; only with a higher legal authority.
> (XVII, 378-79)

As part of his plan for overseers, Ruskin explained that they would submit their information about social need to higher officers of State who would in turn "determine measures exceptionally necessary for public advantage" (XVII, 379). One such measure, indicating the co-operative nature of Ruskin's vision, involves "public works." He suggested that

> the entire body of the public should contribute to the cost, and divide the projects, of all necessary public works and undertakings, as roads, mines, harbour protections, and the like, and that nothing of this kind should be permitted to be in the hands of private speculators.
> (XVII, 380)

As a protection against sickness, old age, unemployment, or any "unknown want," Ruskin's system is thus far reasonably motivated. However, he went a dangerous step further in suggesting that the overseers keep biographical records of the principal events in the life of each family;

> these records, laid up in public offices, would soon furnish indications of the families whom it would be advantageous to the nation to advance in position, or distinguish with honour. (TT XIII; XVII, 378-79)

Hobson attempted to defend the authority of the overseer by denouncing, with Ruskin, the kind of license rampant in nineteenth-century England:

> Never perhaps in the world's history has the particular form of helpless, hopeless "liberty" which shows itself in the poorer life of our great modern cities, elsewhere appeared; where families, grown upon want and ignorance, struggle for a bare subsistence, live in disorder and degradation, and die without society giving to them any systematic recognition whatever.{60}

To soften the criticism against the potentially dangerous power of overseers in record-taking and -keeping, Hobson pointed out that "this scheme is distinguished . . . from the police superintendence which prevails in some countries . . . . [because it] would presume a genuine spirit of humanity."{61} Obviously this "genuine spirit of humanity" is impossible to guarantee in a real as opposed to an ideal commonwealth.

Ruskin's vision of a commonwealth, contains some problematic ideas: some which are irrational; others which are simply utopian. Though the soundness of his arguments for universal education and government-supported social aid, and his humanistic plea for honesty and care in dealing with one's fellow man form the greatest part of his advice, some attention should be paid to Ruskin's faults--faults which help explain his uneven reputation as a social critic.

His attempt to uphold the aristocracy as the natural leaders and teachers of society involves Ruskin's vision of society in contradiction and irrationality. Though the letters of **Time and Tide** were directed to Dixon and the workers of England, there was, as discussed earlier, an apparent shift in the intended audience in letters twenty to twenty-five. In them Ruskin offered an outline for the proper behaviour of the aristocracy as part of his total scheme for a changed commonwealth:

> the office of the upper classes, then, as a body, is to keep order among their inferiors, and raise them always to the nearest level with themselves of which those inferiors are capable . . . .
>
> This, then, being the natural ordinance and function of artistocracy, its corruption . . . is, that those who ought to be the rulers and guides of the people, forsake their task of painful honourableness; seek their own pleasure and pre-eminence only . . . make the lower orders toil for them, and feed and clothe them for nothing, . . . to the point of utter regardlessness of whatever misery these serfs may suffer through such insolent domination. **(TT** XXII; XVII, 430-31)

The fault in Ruskin's thought lies in the premise that the aristocracy are superior beings with "the natural ordinance" to lead. In referring to the working classes as "serfs" Ruskin revealed his outdated and feudalistic view of upper classes and working classes alike.

Worse, he believed the aristocracy to be the natural leaders by "breeding":

> the upper classes, broadly speaking, are

> originally composed of the best-bred (in the merely animal sense of the term), the most energetic, and most thoughtful, of the population . . . . . This is all in the simple course of the law of nature. (TT XXII; XVII, 429-30)

Even Hobson was unable to overlook the problems, as we who live beyond the second World War are unable to overlook the dangers, in Ruskin's stress on breeding. Wrote Hobson:

> Apparently he is willing to take the "upper classes" as they are, with every allowance for the degrading influences of plutocracy and the degeneration caused by luxury, and to moralise and elevate them into a condition which will justify their social and industrial supremacy. His reasoning is based upon curiously simple and defective generalisations of history and heredity.{62}

"Defective generalisations" about race appear in Letter VI, "Dexterity. The Corruption of Modern Pleasure -- (The Japanese Jugglers)." Describing a Japanese exercise done by a man suspended on a pole Ruskin wrote, "its special character was a close approximation to the action and power of the monkey; even to the prehensile power in the foot." Ruskin wondered whether such a grasping foot "could be acquired by practice, or indicated difference in race." He concluded that the impression made on him by the Japanese performers "was that of being in the presence of human creatures of a partially inferior race" (XVII, 341). Earlier, in Letter XX, "Rose-Gardens Of Improvidence in Marriage in the Middle Classes; and of the advisable Reflections of it," he looked to eugenics to produce a better *race!* Perhaps sensing that he was out of his field, he speculated:

> I will not here enter into any statement of the physical laws which it is the province of our physicians to explain; and which are indeed at last so far beginning to be understood, that there is hope of the nation's giving some of the attention to the conditions affecting the race of man, which it has hitherto bestowed only on those which may better its races of cattle. (TT XX; XVII, 420)

Though Ruskin's concept of the ideal commonwealth includes controls in breeding and marriage, one must not exaggerate the importance given to this area of thought. Certainly, the belief that the breeding of the aristocracy is superior and that it justifies their position in society strikes a false note in Ruskin's view of society, but in terms of social improvement, "good birth" receives very little attention, and environment is always more important to Ruskin, as in his assertion that

> enormous difference in bodily and mental capacity [of people] has been mainly brought about by difference in occupation, and by direct maltreatment; and in a few generations, if the poor were cared for, their marriages looked after, and sanitary law enforced, a beautiful type of face and form, and a high intelligence, would become all but universal, in a climate like this of England. Even as it is, the marvel is always to me, how the race resists, at least in its childhood, influences of ill-regulated birth, poisoned food, poisoned air, and social neglect. (TT XVIII; XVII, 405-6)

In this passage Ruskin touched on control in marriage as a means of social amelioration, but his references to the lack of care, poor physical and mental treatment, unhealthy living conditions, and neglect of the "soul" are the main stays of his appeal for legislative and individual efforts at social improvement.

A second major flaw in the Ruskinian vision of an ideal commonwealth follows by definition. Some aspects of his proposed society are simply utopian, and impossible to achieve in any polis. Ruskin, however, was at all times aware of the idealistic strain in his ideas, and quite late in this series of letters he acknowledged this awareness:

> readers think it idle of me to write or dream of such things; as if any of them were in our power, or within possibility of any near realisation. (TT XXIII; XVII, 441)

At the same time that he admitted to dreaming, he revealed the hope that his dream would some day be realised. And we should note that in terms of social and educational reform, much that seemed utopian in 1867 is now reality. Some of Ruskin's ideals have been realised (discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis); however, his advice on marriage and raising children remains forever in the realm of utopia. In his view, only after proving themselves ready--in terms of education, skill in household management, maturity of action, and of age--should men and women be allowed to marry. Once married they would be guaranteed "a fixed income from the State, for seven years from the day of their marriage, for the setting up of their homes." Ruskin outlined the conditions for raising children simultaneously with those for marriage. Before receiving permision to wed and, inferentially, to reproduce, a couple must "give well-founded expectations of their being able honourably to maintain and teach their children" (TT XX; XVII, 420-22). His proposals for marriage and parenting, Ruskin openly lamented, would be viewed as "mere romance and unrealizable vision." But he did not

> make the slightest effort to redeem them from these imputations; for . . . there is nothing in all their purport which would not be approved, as in the deepest sense "practical" . . . .

He added:

> though I know that national justice in conduct, and peace in heart, could by no other laws be so swiftly secured, I confess with much *dispeace* of heart, that both justice and happiness have at this day become, in England, "romantic impossibilities." (TT XX; XVII, 422)

Because of Ruskin's utopian concepts and what Hobson called his "defective generalisations about heredity," his scheme for a socially, economically, and morally improved commonwealth has obvious flaws. Nevertheless, many of Ruskin's rational ideas about social policy and government responsibility were realised by the turn of the century; more are realised today.

In the letters of **Time and Tide**, Ruskin showed increasing impatience and anger with his public and cynicism about existing society, feelings which intrude into all categories of discussion in the twenty-five letters. Commenting on the workings of Parliament in Letter III, "Legislation," he asserted insultingly that

> the wisest system of voting that human brains could devise would be of no use as long as the majority of the voters were fools, which is manifestly as yet the fact. (TT III; XVII, 326)

Angry at the public willingness to allocate millions for military expenditures, while spurning a request for an art grant of, by comparison, a mere 48,000 pounds, Ruskin raved

> you practical English! --will you ever unbar the shutters of your brains, and hang a picture or two in *those* state-chambers? (TT IV; XVII, 332)

Letter XIX, "Broken Reeds," closes with an outpouring of anger, frustration and fatigue directed at Britain's rich, who would neither listen to Ruskin, nor accept any responsibility for the poor. Though this lengthy passage should be read in its entirety, the following excerpt reflects its tone and meaning:

> It is not the mere crippling of my means that I regret. It is the crippling of my temper, and waste of my time. The knowledge of all this distress, even when I can assist it,--much more when I cannot,--and the various thoughts of what I can and cannot . . . do, are a far greater burden to me than the mere loss of money.
>
> . . . .
>
> I don't want to be an almoner, nor a counsellor, nor a Member of Parliament. (. . . I have never voted in my life, and never mean to do so!) I am essentially a painter and a leaf dissector; and my powers of thought are purely mathematical, seizing ultimate principles only . . . . So, in every way, I like a quiet life; and I don't like seeing people cry, or die; and should rejoice, more than I can tell you, in giving up the full half of my fortune for the poor, provided I knew that the public would make Lord Overstone [a leading banker] also give the half of his, and other people who were independent give the half of theirs; and then set men who were really fit for such office to administer the fund. (TT XIX; XVII, 415-16)

His many personal asides marked **Time and Tide** as the last of his formal writings on economic, social, and political issues. Although he continued to express his economic and social philosopy throughout the next decade, in **Time and Tide** he began to approach the end in print of his social pilgrimage. As he explained in Letter XIII:

> I mean these very letters to close my political work for many a day; and I write them, not in any hope of their being at present listened to, but to disburthen my heart of the witness I have to bear, that I may be free to go back to my garden lawns, and paint. (XVII, 376-77)

This passage concludes a comparison of his role as social critic with that of the ilustrator, George Cruikshank. He stressed the importance of their "crusades" in spite of public disapproval of their work and of the personal sacrifices each had made. In **The Darkening Glass**, his autobiographical study of Ruskin, Rosenberg quoted this passage, and in a highly speculative comment, explained that "Ruskin wrote **Time and Tide** because he had to unburden his heart of what tormented him not merely in the public streets but in the recesses of his private world."(63) Rosenberg overlooked Ruskin's serious and acknowledged acceptance of his responsibility to record the faults he saw in his society at the cost of spending his middle and late life peacefully among his art and his gardens:

> Cruikshank with his great gift, and I with my small, but yet thoroughly clear and definite one, should both of us be tormented by agony of indignation and compassion, till we are forced to

> give up our peace, and pleasure, and power; and rush down into the streets and lanes of the city, to do the little that is in the strength of our single hands against their uncleanliness and iniquity. (TT XIII; XVII, 376)

Still aware of the criticisms of his ideas on government authority, which impaired his credibility in other areas, he confessed

> now I do not care about influence any more, it being only my concern to say truly that which I know, and, if it may be, get some quiet life, yet, among the fields in the evening shadow. (TT XIII; XVII, 377)

More specifically, to those who neither understood nor accepted his and Carlyle's arguments against "the trust in liberty and equality" of the people of America, he wrote,

> You may find the mouthpieces of your own opinions cheaply elsewhere, if that is all you want, and to those mouthpieces we shall very thankfully leave you and that shortly--Carlyle, because he is old and weary, and feels that he has done his work; and I, because for people who only hear me in that spirit, I do not feel that any work is by me to be done. (TT Appendix VIII; XVII, 478)

Throughout **Time and Tide**, as in the earlier social texts, Ruskin was aware that his ideas were radical, and philosophically opposed to the nineteenth-century current of parliamentary reform, industrial progress, and free enterprise. He was, in all three of the major texts, out of step with contemporary pace-setters. And yet, on April 24th, 1867, while completing the final letter of **Time and Tide** he noticed an article in the **Pall Mall Gazette** (April 23, 1867) which he described as "the first real and notable sign of the victory of the principles I have been fighting for, these seven years," since writing **Unto This Last**. The article, which reiterated his own disgust for the accepted science of political economy as opposed to one which was rightly humanitarian, asked

> "whether political economy be the sordid and materialistic science some account it, or almost the noblest on which thought can be employed?"

The article continued,

> "Ostentation, parental pride, and a host of moral" (immortal?) "qualities must be recognized as among the springs of industry; political economy should not ignore these, but to discuss them, *it must abandon its pretensions to the precision of a pure science.*" (TT XXIV; XVII, 450)

Ruskin welcomed this sign that his social ideas had not been entirely misunderstood, and he congratulated the **Gazette**:

> Well done the **Pall Mall!** Had it written "Prudence and parental affection," instead of "Ostentation and parental pride" . . . it would then have achieved the expression of a part of the truth which I put into clear terms in the first sentence of **Unto This Last**. (TT XXIV; XVII, 450)

The subject of that first sentence, his plea for social affection, had not gone unheard.

By the end of the century Ruskin's social, economic, and political ideas--the teachings of **Unto This Last**, **Munera Pulveris** and **Time and Tide**--were being defended in major journals and books on economics and society.(64) Frederic Harrison, an economist and an early advocate of Ruskin explained that

> the brutal, ignorant, and inhuman language which was current about capital and labour, workmen, and trades-unions is heard no longer. The old plutocracy is a thing of the past. And no man has done more to expose it than the author of **Unto This Last**.(65)

In another study, **John Ruskin: Economist** (Edinburgh: Brown, 1884), Patrick Geddes assessed the economic teachings of **Munera Pulveris** as the most practical of political economy because they take into account human life as well as the role of society and environment. And E. T. Cook wrote that Ruskin's "services in the reconstruction of economic thought" received public recognition in 1885, when

> he was presented with an Address, signed by many of the foremost men of the day, and in the course of the Address his economic work was thus mentioned:--
>
> "Those of us who have made a special study of ecomonic and social questions desire to convey to you their [sic] deep sense of the value of your work in these subjects, pre-eminently in its enforcement of the doctrines:--
>
> "That Political Economy can furnish sound laws of national life and work only when it respects the dignity and moral destiny of man.
>
> "That the wise use of wealth, in developing a complete human life, is of incomparably greater moment both to men and nations than its production or accumulation, and can alone give these any vital significance.
>
> "That . . . not in competition but in helpfulness, not in self-assertion but in reverence, is to be found the power of life." (XVII, cvi-cvii)

E. T. Cook asserted that by 1905 all the social ideas outlined in the preface to **Unto this Last** had "either been put into operation (whole or partial), or were a subject of discussion among practical politicians." Cook went on to list the contemporary policies and political debates which seemed to reflect Ruskin's suggestions--suggestions made more than forty years before. Cook pointed, for example, to

> the growing conception of the State as Model Employer, and the modern extensions of Government warranty and anti-adulteration laws as steps in the direction indicated by Ruskin . . . . The occasional establishment of Municipal Relief Works, the acceptance of a certain responsibility involved in the foundation of a Labour Department and a **Labour Gazette**, and the introduction of a Government Bill in the present session (1905) for the establishment of Relief Committees . . . : these things are all in line with Ruskin's doctrines . . . . [Ruskin's] proposal No. 7 (Old Age Pensions, etc.) is simply Mr. Chamberlain's scheme for Old Age Pensions, *plus* various proposals for a reformed Poor Law. (XVII, cviii)

Even Wilenski who viewed Ruskin's social criticism as a side-effect of his psychological, personal, and medical problems, recognized that his were social, economic, and political ideas

> beyond which . . . few men, if any, have far advanced to-day.

Later Wilenski added (writing in the midst of the Great Depression of the nineteen-thirties):

> If we read [Ruskin] with patience . . . we find, I submit, something of substance and of service for problems not only of his own time, but also--and perhaps still more--for problems that confront the world to-day.(66)

The pertinence of Ruskin's social thought to our own century remains to be established in my next chapter, "The Influence of Ruskin's Social Thought." Sadly, Ruskin could not imagine the impact his writing would have on future generations. Nor could he see how widely accepted would be the social policies and social economy he had conceived. The declarations of twentieth-century social, economic, and political thinkers support the conclusion that Ruskin's writings have had direct and indirect influence on social change in this century.{67} In particular, the mature social voice of Ruskin's **Unto This Last**, **Munera Pulveris**, and **Time and Tide** exerted a major influence on the evolution of a more social, co-operative form of government, and on the evolution of a sociological perspective for political and economic policy.

Notes

1. E. T. Cook, "Introduction" to **Works**; XVII, lxxxiii.

2. John Ruskin, **Arrows of the Chace being a Collection of Letters Published Chiefly in the Daily Newspapers, -- 1840-1880,** 2 vols. (Sunnyside, Orpington, Kent: George Allen, 1880). See pages x to xi for a list of letters on the topics mentioned. Volume One is a collection of letters on art and science, Two on politics and economics. In both volumes the letters are organized in topic categories, and each volume includes a table which chronologically gives the title of the letter, the place, and date of its writing, and the place and page of publication. Both collections are included in Volume XXXIV of the **Works** edition.

3. R. H. Wilenski, **John Ruskin, An Introduction to Further Study of His Life and Work,** rpt. from London: Faber & Faber, 1933 (New York: Russel and Russel, 1967), pp. 293-94.

4. The three major political-economic works contain Ruskin's arguments against these propositions. See, for example:
1) Letter XXI in **Time and Tide**; XVII, 423-24;
2) Essay #4, "Ad Valorem," in **Unto This Last**; XVII, 102-04;
3) Chapter II, "Store-Keeping," in **Munera Pulveris**; XVII, 183;
4) Preface to **Munera Pulveris**; XVII, 139;
5) Essay #2, "The Veins of Wealth," in **Unto This Last**; XVII, 53-54.

5. Robert Hewison, "Afterword," in **New Approaches to Ruskin** (1982), p. 228. Hewison added that the genre of "cultural history"

> is so vague, and its methodology so unestablished, that Ruskin may yet escape academic institutionalization. As a Ruskinian, I am delighted that this should be so, even if it reduces the profitability of our work. (pp. 228-29)

6. John T. Fain, in **Ruskin and the Economists** (1956), wrote a brief but inclusive chapter summarizing the positions held by N. W. Senior, J. S. Mill, J. E. Cairnes, and W. Bagehot. In this chapter, "Orthodox Political Economy" (pp. 52-69), he included an enlightening defense

of Adam Smith and a brief assessment of Ruskin's understanding of the motives of this group of thinkers. Also see my discussion of the evolution of the study of Political Economy, Chapter II, "John Ruskin's Social Thought: The Philosophical and Historical Context," pp. 69-71 and Chapter IV, "The Mature Voice: The Political Economics of **Unto This Last, Munera Pulveris,** and **Time and Tide,"** pp. 160-62.

7. John Stuart Mill, "On the Definition of Political Economy; and on the Method of Investigation Proper to It," Essay V in **Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy,** No. 7 in the Series of Scarce Works on Political Economy (1944 rpt.; London: School of Economics and Political Science, 1948), p. 137.

8. William Smart, **A Disciple of Plato: A Critical Study of John Ruskin** (Glasgow: Wilson and McCormick, 1883), p. 41. John T. Fain's recent article, "Ruskin and Smart," provides a brief summary of Smart's economic thought which suggests several other instances in which he misunderstood Ruskin's economic ideas. Above all, Fain's article supports the view that Smart was among Ruskin's most ardent early supporters (see **Studies in Ruskin: Essays in Honor of Van Akin Burd** (1982), pp. 206-14).

9. E. T. Cook quoted this passage in his "Introduction" to Vol. XVII of the **Works** edition ("Note by Mr. Ruskin on p. 48 of [Ruskin's personal copy] of **A Disciple of Plato"**; XVII, xxxi).

10. Ruskin presented this definition again in a letter to the **Daily Telegraph** (August 10, 1868). It is reprinted in **Arrows of the Chace,** Vol. II (Kent: George Allen, 1880), 122-28. See the references to the letters in **Arrows**; XXXIV, 459-68.

11. Fain, **Ruskin and the Economists,** p. 117.

12. Peter Bayne, **Lessons from My Masters, Carlyle, Tennyson, and Ruskin** (London: James Clark & Co., 1879), p. 436.

13. See Fain, **Ruskin and the Economists,** pp. 135-41, for a thorough analysis of the passage on value in **Unto This Last** (XVII, 79-80).

14. Fain, **Ruskin and the Economists,** pp. 134-35.

15. Ruskin included major passages on interest in **Munera Pulveris; Munera**; XVII, 223 and **Fors Clavigera,** Letters 1, 8, 14, 18, and 45.

16. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer** (1898), pp. 149, 148, 147. Read pages 144-52 for a more complete analysis of Ruskin's views on interest.

17. Frederic Harrison, **John Ruskin**, English Men of Letters Series (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1907), p. 981. Interestingly, Comte is credited with creating the term "sociology" to distinguish the humanistic study of society and its related political-economic workings from the individualism propagated by Smith, Malthus, and Ricardo (in England) and the Physiocrats (in France), including Francois Quesnay (1694-1774) who fathered the term *laissez-faire* in his demand that government regulations be removed from economic development.

18. First published in the **English Illustrated Magazine** for November 1891, the letter is reprinted in Volume XVII, pp. xxxii-xxxiii. Carlyle first used the term "dismal-science" to describe the economics associated with *laissez-faire* attitudes in his **Latter-Day Pamphlets** (1850), in **The Works of Thomas Carlyle**, Centenary Edition, Vol. XX (London: Chapman and Hall, 1896-99), 43.

19. Ruskin admired Dickens' social criticism, but felt Dickens' message was lost to some extent because of the fictional form he used. In a lengthy footnote to his comments on **Bleak House** and **Hard Times** Ruskin wrote:

> The essential value and truth of Dickens' writings have been unwisely lost sight of by many thoughtful persons, merely because he presents his truth with some colour of caricature. Unwisely, because Dickens' caricature, though often gross, is never mistaken. Allowing for his manner of telling them, the things he tells us are always true. I wish that he could think it right to limit his brilliant exaggeration to works written only for public amusement; and when he takes up a subject of high national importance, such as that which he handled in **Hard Times**, that he would use severer and more accurate analysis . . . . But let us not lose the use of Dickens' wit and insight, because he chooses to speak in a circle of stage fire. He is entirely right in his main drift and purpose in every book he has written; and all of them, but especially **Hard Times**, should be studied with close and earnest care by persons interested in social questions. (**Unto This Last**, Essay I; XVII 31)

See Nick Shrimpton, "'Rust and Dust': Ruskin's Pivotal Work," in **New Approaches to Ruskin** (1981), pp. 63-64 for a brief discussion of Dickens' influence on Ruskin.

20. Ruskin used the words manufacturer and merchant interchangeably throughout the essay. In discussing the true purpose of the manufacturer, he wrote "observe, the merchant's function (or manufacturer's, for in the broad sense on which it is here used the word must be understood to include both) is to provide for the nation" (XVII, 40).

21. Ruskin referred to these three necessary professions--the pastor's, physician's, and merchant's--in **Munera Pulveris**; XVII, 269; **Two Paths**; XVI, 370; and **Fors Clavigera**, Letter 84; XXIX.

22. Fain, **Ruskin and the Economists**, pp. 116 and 117.

23. Fain, **Ruskin and the Economists**, pp. 115.

24. Of taxation, Ruskin explained that though the percent of their wages paid by the poor is "grievous," they would be no better off if taxation were lowered:

> If the workman had not to pay [taxes], his wages would be less by just that sum; competition would still reduce them to the lowest rate at which life was possible. (71-72)

Again the unjust method of payment is the root cause of the oppression experienced by the poor labourer.

25. The Two passages quoted by Ruskin are from **A Joy For Ever**; XVI, 26 and **Modern Painters V**; VII, 207.

26. Fain, **Ruskin and the Economists**, pp. 135-41.

27. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, p. 89.

28. Clyde E. Dankert, "Wealth and Illth--Ruskin Reconsidered," **Dalhousie Review**, 54 (1974-75), 41.

29. Ruskin pointed out that more often the consumer exchanges his currency (indirectly his time and labour) for things he *wishes for* rather than things he *needs*. "Three-fourths of the demands existing in the world are romantic; founded on visions, idealisms, hopes, and affections; and the regulation of the purse is in its essence, regulation of the imagination and the heart," (XVII, 94). In this thought is a warning for all of Ruskin's readers and an explanation for his denigration of deceptive advertising.

30. Ruskin examined Mill's proposition at greater length in **Fors Clavigera**, Letter 2 (February 1, 1871), "The Great Picnic"; XXVII, 32-38.

31. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, pp. 83-84.

32. Of the twenty-one chapters translated the following deserve special attention:
Chapter II, "Of True Wealth: --not that which brings with it trouble and toil, but that of the provident and thrifty economist: --where such is to be learnt"
Chapter XI, "Of Socrates and the Horse of Nicias. Of the Right Use of Wealth. Also How Ischomachus spent his Day seeking to Promote Justice at Home and Abroad"
Chapter XIV, "How Stewards are to be Taught Justice."
Chapter XXI, "How that the Art of Managing Men is Difficult of Attainment, and in some Measure Given of God"
In **The Diaries of John Ruskin, 1848-1873**, eds. Evans and Whitehouse (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), p. 571, Ruskin made a reference to completing Xenophon's **Economist** on October 7, 1862.

33. John D. Rosenberg, **The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin's Genius** (1961), p. 153.

34. Rosenberg, **The Darkening Glass**, pp. 153-54.

35. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, p. 45.

36. Frederic Harrison, **John Ruskin** (London: MacMillan & Co., 1902), pp. 102-03.

37. Philippe Jaudel, **La Pensée Sociale de John Ruskin** (Paris: Librairie Marcel Dider, 1972), p. 30.

38. The original essays were titled as follows:
1) Maintenance of Life: Wealth, Money and Riches (Chapter One, "Definitions");
2) Nature of Wealth and Labour: Store Keeping and Currency (Chapters Two and Three, "Store-Keeping" and "Coin-Keeping");
3) Labour and Trade: The Disease of Desire (Chapter Four, "Commerce");
4) Laws and Governments: Labour and Riches (Chapters Five and Six, "Government" and "Mastership").

39. Ruskin provided a list of five categories of "valuable material things":
(i) Land, with its associated air, water, and organi
(ii) Houses, furniture, and instruments;
(iii) Stored or prepared food, medicine, and articles bodily luxury, including clothing;
(iv) Books;
(v) Works of Art.
He expanded each in explaining its conditions of value (what use results in wealth?) (XVII, 154).

40. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, p. 126.

41. Joan Evans and John Howard Whitehouse, eds., **The Diaries of John Ruskin**, Vol. II, 1848-1873 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 570. The entry was dated "Sept[ember] 24th. Bonneville."

42. Appendix II of Volume XVII of the **Works** edition contains various letters written by Ruskin in 1863 on "The Depreciation of Gold" (pp. 488-98). These letters "were elicited by an article in the **Times** of September 23, 1863, upon the panic as to the depreciation of gold caused by the fresh discoveries of the metal in California and Australia" (XVII, 488).

43. See, for example, the discussions on possession in the second chapter (XVII, 160-70) and on the character and role of store-holders and currency-holders in Chapter III (XVII, 205-07).

44. The passage is taken from **The Merchant of Venice** (IV, i, 182-85) which actually reads:

> The quality of mercy is not strained;
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven,
> Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
> It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

See also **Munera Pulveris**, ch. IV; XVII, 223; and for Ruskin's explanation of "the intent of Shakespeare throughout the **Merchant of Venice**," see **Fors Clavigera**, Letter 76; XXIX.

45. Modern Political Economy in comparison, Ruskin explained,

> [had] no connection whatever with political economy, as understood and treated of by the great thinkers of past ages; and as long as its unscholarly and undefined statements are allowed to pass under the same name, every word written on the subject by those thinkers--and chiefly the words of Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, and Bacon--must be nearly useless to mankind.
> (ch. I, "Definitions"; XVII, 147-48)

46. For a summary of the major themes and topics in **Unto This Last** and **Munera Pulveris**, see Philippe Jaudel's **La Pensée Sociale de John Ruskin**, "Troisième Partie," pp. 177-326. Jaudel organised passages from both works under subject titles. See, for example, Section I, Chapter II, "Les Vraies Richesses" which is subdivided into "L'Homo Economicus," "Valeur, Utilite et Richesse," "Des Biens et Des Hommes"; or Section II, Chapter I, "Produire Pour Vivre," with the sub-sections, "Le Travail," "Le Capital," and "L'Apprenti Sorcier." The

complete list of headings and sub-headings is given on page 445 of Jaudel's study.

47. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, p. 279.

48. R. H. Wilenski gave more detailed information in his references to the street cleaning in Seven Dials by some unemployed men, 1872; to the Tea Shop opened in Marylebone, 1874; and to "the celebrated episode of the Hincksey road-making of 1874." See Wilenski, **John Ruskin: An Introduction**, pp. 109-12.

For further explication of Ruskin's practical philanthropy see Frederic Harrison, Chapter XIII, "Social Experiments--Guild of St. George," in **John Ruskin**, pp. 164-80; Frederick William Roe, Part III, "Utopia" in **The Social Philosophy of Carlyle and Ruskin** (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1921), pp. 258-88; and Robert Hewison, **John Ruskin: The Argument of the Eye** (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), pp. 167-90.

49. For further descriptions of Ruskin's St. George's Guild see: John Ruskin, **The Guild and Museum of St. George: Reports, Catalogues and Other Papers** (London: George Allen & Co., 1907) and Margaret E. Spence, "The Guild of St. George: Ruskin's Attempt to Translate his Ideas into Practice," **Bulletin of the John Rylands Library**, 40 (1957), 147-201.

50. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, p. 49.

51. For this passage see John Ruskin, Letter IX, "Thanksgiving," **Time and Tide by Weare and Tyne. Twenty-Five Letters to a Working Man of Sunderland on the Laws of Work**; XVII, 355-56.

Further quotations from the letters of **Time and Tide** are followed by parentheses which include, where applicable, the abbreviation **TT** and the letter number, a semi-colon, and the volume and page numbers. For example, the above case rewritten is: **(TT** IX; XVII, 355-56).

52. Rosenberg, **The Darkening Glass**, p. 167.

53. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, p. 154.

54. Wilenski and Rosenberg, like so many critics, discuss Ruskin's feelings for Rose La Touche as being, first, unnatural (Ruskin's proposal to the eighteen year old Rose when he was forty-seven is supposed to prove Ruskin's perversity) and second, bitter. Passages in **Fors Clavigera** which suggest Ruskin's sincere compassion for Rose are unfortunately overlooked. During her bouts of insanity and following her death Ruskin wrote,

One of my best friends has just gone mad. **(Fors,**

> Letter 48, Dec., 1874)

and

> The woman I hoped would have been my wife is dying. **(Fors**, Letter 49, Jan., 1875)

55. Rosenberg, **The Darkening Glass**, pp. 170 and 166.

56. Rosenberg, **The Darkening Glass**, p. 168.

57. In 1872 Ruskin rearranged parts of this earlier publication for printing in the Cook and Wedderburn **Collected Works**. The editors included an appendix to Volume XVII (Appendix VIII, pp. 474-82) which indicates the major changes made and provides a copy of the major passages omitted by Ruskin.

58. As especially relevant, E. T. Cook listed the following passages under the given headings: "Education as the first duty of the state" **(Time and Tide**; XVII, 377, **Unto This Last**; XVII, 21, and **Munera Pulveris**; XVII, 231-32); "Schools to teach music" **(Fors Clavigera**, Letters 5, 73, 82, and 95); "System to include Trial Schools" **(Time and Tide**; XVII, 320, **Unto This Last**; XVII, 21, **A Joy For Ever**; XVI, 44, 115-16, and **Fors Clavigera**, Letter 40).

59. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, p. 164.

60. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, p. 172.

61. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, p. 173.

62. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, p. 168.

63. Rosenberg, **The Darkening Glass**, p. 170.

64. See the bibliography of major articles written from 1883 to 1905 compiled by E. T. Cook; XVII, cxii.

65. Frederic Harrison, "Unto This Last," **Nineteenth Century**, 38 (December, 1895), 972.

66. R. H. Wilenski, **John Ruskin: An Introduction to Further Study**, pp. 191, 302.

67. Of course, no one thinker can claim sole credit for the changing directions of social, economic, and political thought at the end of the nineteenth century; a complex of thinkers and circumstances led to the growth of new ideas and new ways for men and women to care for one another in society. Though twentieth-century social criticism of competition, exploitation, welfare, and democracy clearly connect back to Ruskin's views we must

keep in mind the wealth of thought preceding and coinciding with Ruskin's writings. For a comprehensive list of works that anticipated Ruskin's ideas see the bibliography provided by James Clark Sherburne, in **John Ruskin or the Ambiguities of Abundance: A Study in Social and Economic Criticism** (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1972), which includes primary and secondary reading lists for relevant Romantic thought; classical economic thought; and Eighteenth-century social thought.

CHAPTER V

The Influence of Ruskin's Social Thought

John Ruskin's social, economic, and political ideas anticipated the direction of twentieth-century thought. Time and experience would lead others to the same conclusions reached by Ruskin in the eighteen-fifties and sixties. Many of his ideas directly or indirectly influenced social, economic, and political change at the end of the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth century. His criticism of the self-interested *laissez-faire* dogmas of classical economics created distrust of individualism in political economy, paving the way for government intervention, especially in education, health, and employment. His criticism of the abstract concept of economic man encouraged more humane concern in the creation of social policies and in economic decision making. His plea for social affection and economic humanism in the nineteenth century stimulated social action through socialist leagues and labour movements. Twentieth-century implementation of Ruskin's ideas indicates their pertinence, logic, and soundness; the twentieth-century social concern for the betterment of all citizens, "the welfare of all," reiterates the main concerns of **A Joy For Ever, Unto This Last, Munera Pulveris**, and **Time and Tide**. In 1898 John A. Hobson openly acknowledged his debt to Ruskin, a debt owed him by many:

> From Ruskin I drew the basic thought for my subsequent . . . writings, viz. the necessity of going beyond the current monetary estimates of wealth, cost, and utility, to reach the body of human benefits and satisfactions which gave them real meaning.{1}

Sadly, Ruskin could see no influence from his writing on his own generation. Nor could he foresee how his social and economic ideas, which had met with such fervid criticism, disbelief, and condemnation, in his own time, anticipated the changes of the next century. In **Fors Clavigera** (1871-78; 1880-84), the last expression of his social concern,{2} Ruskin revealed his private disappointments and regrets, while still urging the merit of his ideas about improving society. He described the method of the ninety-six letters as an organic

> mosiac-work into which I can put a piece here and there as I find glass of the colour I want; what is as yet done, being set, indeed, in patches, but not without design. (**Fors** 36; XXVII, 669)

The design includes all that he said before, but is here fused with poetic imagery and symbolism, and heightened by his personal sense of having failed to effect the sent-for changes. Paul L. Sawyer, in "Ruskin and St. George: The Dragon-Killing Myth in 'Fors Clavigera'," and John D. Rosenberg, in "Ruskin's Benediction: A Reading of **Fors Clavigera**," both defined the underlying order of this series of letters in its themes and its autobiographical impulses. Sawyer suggested a thematic unity in which

> the public and private voices come together in the persona of a man who has been given the prophetic mantle for mysterious reasons, at the price of a sense of personal loss and failure,

and he examined the autobiographical "themes of expulsion and loss, the burden of prophecy . . . insanity, and eventual withdrawal."{3} Rosenberg, in his sensitive discussion of Letter 20, "Benediction," identified the pain of the modern world as a central autobiographical impulse in **Fors**. In his analysis of the **Capo d'Istria** paragraph, Rosenberg quoted Ruskin's description of the "modern music" of the steamers, "going through [his] head like a knife."{4}

The **Fors Clavigera** letters, addressed to "The Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain," stand as Ruskin's final condemnation of the inhumane, secular, industrial world he could no longer bear. In vain he searched for signs that men had heard his message. Repeated images of an uncaring, unlistening society, which puts money before people, affirm his sense of failure.

In the opening letter, "Looking Down from Ingleborough," (January 1, 1871), Ruskin repeated his earlier condemnations:

> we have all, lately, lived ourselves in the daily endeavour to get as much out of our neighbours and friends as we could; and having by this means, indeed, got a good deal out of each other, and put nothing into each other, the actually obtained result, this day, is a state of

> emptiness in purse and stomache. (XXVII, 12)

Ruskin's social conscience led him, even as Slade Professor of Fine Art (1869-79; 1882-84),{5} to devote himself to more than aesthetic pursuits:

> I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else that I like, and the very light of the morning sky, [sic] when there is any--which is seldom, now-a-days, near London--has become hateful to me, because of the misery I know of, and see signs of. (**Fors** 1; XXVII, 13)

This misery prompted him to restate, in the letters, his social and economic principles and reminded him of his failure to effect reform. The opening letter restates the social positions of **Unto This Last, Munera Pulveris** and **Time and Tide**: repeats Ruskin's arguments against liberty, democracy, and the British party system; calls for honest men to run the country; presses for the protection of urban development (which includes a wish to destroy "the new town of Edinburgh, the north suburb of Geneva, and the city of New York"); demands food, clothes, lodging, and fuel for every member of society; and repeats the definitions of wages, capital, and interest, and the explanations of the relativity of poverty and wealth. The letters of **Fors Clavigera** begin, then, very much as the letters of **Time and Tide** end. However, the invective mixed with the restatement of his earlier social positions reveals Ruskin`s inner despair occasioned by his sense of a society which refused to hear what he had to say.

Self-assessments suggesting failure and revealing suffering, appear alongside the repetitions of his social and economic arguments from beginning to end in **Fors Clavigera**: "My hand is weary of pen-holding--and my heart is sick of thinking" (Letter 6, June 1871), he wrote. Later that year he examined the criticism of his letters made in journals and reviews (Letter 9, Sept. 1871). In May 1872 he seemed devastated because no one had responded to his plea for contributions to the St. George's Fund (Letter 17, "The Sword of St. George). By November Ruskin decided to write familiarly to his readers no longer; he would neither use the salutation "friends," nor conclude with "faithfully yours," nor sign his name (Letter 24). Letter 37, written in January 1874, reveals his persistent concern for practical reform and his frustration at failing to induce change:

> I am left utterly stranded, and alone, in life and thought . . . .
>
> I am free to confess I did not quite know the sort of creature I had to deal with, when I began, fifteen years ago [1859], nor the quantity of ingenious resistance to practical reform which could be offered by theoretical reformers. (XXVIII, 15-16)

By the end of 1874 Ruskin's sense of failure showed in his embittered criticism of society:

> we, who feel as men, and not as carnivorous worms, we, who are every day recognizing some inaccessible height of thought and power, and are miserable in our shortcomings,--the few of us now standing here and there, alone, in the midst of this yelping, carnivorous crowd, mad for money and lust, tearing each other to pieces, and starving each other to death, and leaving heaps

> of their dung and ponds of their spittle on every palace floor and altar stone,--it is impossible for us, except in the labour of our hands, not to go mad. (**Fors** 48; XXVIII, 207)

In the mid-seventies he ironically saw his "shortcomings," felt isolated and "alone," and perhaps even anticipated his bouts of "madness." Ruskin increasingly articulated this sense of isolation before his mental breadkown in 1878. "Being entirely at one in my views of Nature and life with every great classic author," he wrote, "I am yet alone in the midst of a modern crowd which rejects them all" (Letter 76, March 1877). Never doubting the validity of his social criticism, which he had based on "Natural Law" and the classics as well as on Biblical teachings, Ruskin rightly assessed his works as important. However, he could not see the beneficial influence that his writings were exerting, or anticipate their effect continuing well into the next century.

After his breakdown and the subsequent two year interruption in the writing of **Fors**, Ruskin gave a most intimate account of his mental collapse in Letter 88, from Brantwood (Feb.8, 1880):

> I must yet allow myself a few more words of autobiography touching this point. The doctors said that I went mad, this time two years ago, from overwork. I had not been then working more than usual, and what was usual with me had become easy. But I went mad because nothing came of my work. People would have understood my falling crazy if they had heard that the manuscripts on which I had spent seven years of my old life had all been used to light the fire with, like Carlyle's first volume of the **French Revolution.** But they could not understand that I should be

> the least annoyed, far less fall ill in a frantic manner, because, after I had got them published, nobody believed a word of them. Yet the first calamity would only have been misfortune,--the second (the enduring calamity under which I toil) is humiliation,--resisted necessarily by a dangerous and lonely pride.
>
> . . . .
>
> All alike, in whom I had most trusted for help, failed me in this main work: some mocked at it, some pitied, some rebuked,--all stopped their ears at the cry: and the solitude at last became too great to be endured. (XXIX, 386-87)

Only one other letter (Aug. 31, 1880) intervened before a second collapse, which lasted two-and-a-half years. In Letter 96, the last letter of **Fors**, written December 1884, he lamented

> Looking back upon my efforts for the last twenty years, I believe that their failure has been in very great part owing to my compromise with the infidelity of this outer world, and my endeavour to base my pleading upon motives of ordinary prudence and kindness. (XXIX, 527)

Ruskin's final assessment of his social and economic writings, that they had failed to effect any of the changes he so much wanted to see, persisted for the next sixteen years until his death.

Against his sense that he had failed stand the avowals of social, economic, and political thinkers, and of literary critics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that he succeeded; his despairing conclusions are contradicted by the humanistic redirection of twentieth-century social, economic, and political policies along the lines that he advocated. Notwithstanding attacks on his views from the press and from his peers, and in spite of Ruskin's perception of "failure," his social ideas grew in popularity over the last thirty years of the century, when **Fors** was being written.{6} By the end of the century and of Ruskin's life, J. A. Hobson could call him "the greatest social teacher of his age," because Ruskin had "made the most powerful and the most felicitous attempt to grasp and to express, as a comprehensive whole, the needs of a human society and the processes of social reform."{7} Twenty years afterwards Ruskin was still a force to be reckoned with; in a lecture at the Royal Academy, George Bernard Shaw said that "the Ruskinite is the most thorough-going of our opponents of the existing state of society."{8}

Ruskin's social thought found advocates and defenders among various writers on social and economic theory.{9} John A. Hobson, Patrick Geddes, and William Morris for example, were all strongly influenced by Ruskin's works. Hobson, Geddes, and Morris all wrote studies of his teachings. In **John Ruskin: Social Reformer** (1898), Hobson credited Ruskin with having humanized economic thought and with having executed growing concern for the welfare of society in the late nineteenth century. In his own economic treatises, Hobson borrowed Ruskin's definitions of wealth and value. Geddes wrote one of the earliest studies of Ruskin's economics, **John Ruskin, Economist** (1884), and in a later study, **Cities of Evolution** (1915), acknowledged Ruskin's ideas as influential to his urban planning studies. Morris acknowledged Ruskin's social directions throughout his later lectures and articles, for example, in "Art, Wealth and Riches" (1883) and "Art and Democracy" (1883).

Hobson devoted the whole thirteenth chapter of his lengthy study to a "Summary of Mr. Ruskin's Work and Influence." He suggested that the influence of Ruskin's social thought would carry on into the future because Ruskin had been able to see and then to articulate, first, the problems of modern industrial society, and second, the changes necessary to rehabilitate that society. He explained that

> Ruskin has exposed the three deepest and most destructive maladies of modern, industrial society with more intellectual acuteness and with more convincing elequence [sic] than any other writer.

These maladies are the mechanization of man's work and life; the injustice of economic bargaining; and the waste and injury to work and human character arising from competition. Hobson also recognized that Ruskin's ideas put into practice could redirect the social economy by establishing human priorities. These ideas include his theory of wealth which stresses human costs and benefits; his economic premise which includes non-commercial as well as commercial values; and his social objectives which establish happiness and health as most important.{10}

Sherburne, in **The Ambiguities of Abundance**, and G. D. H. Cole, in his analysis, "John A. Hobson," both argued that Ruskin's influence extended through Hobson to other twentieth-century thinkers. Sherburne suggested that "those who point to Hobson as the source of Lenin's theory of imperialism and capitalist aggression would do well to consider the possibility that Ruskin's fragmented suggestions had an influence on Hobson as great in this as in [economic] respects."{11} Cole explained that Ruskin and Hobson together anticipated much twentieth-century economic orthodoxy. He outlined the indebtedness of ecnomics to Hobson and, by association, to Ruskin.{12} The significance of this influence is that it taught the twentieth century that economic processes must be studied not in isolation, but in relation to the welfare of society.

Patrick Geddes in his studies of urbanization, reinforced Ruskin's claims against waste--both of human life and of materials--caused by the unchecked growth of industrialism. Geddes' work rehabilitating slum tenements followed the lead of Octavia Hill and Ruskin. In **Cities of Evolution**, Chapter Eighteen, "Economics of City Betterment," he acknowledged that "Octavia Hill's work for housing arose . . . in factorship for Ruskin as her first property owner." He added that Ruskin's own "'St. George's Guild,' though unsuccessful, was none the less a project whose ideas and ideals are still suggestive."{13} Ruskin's comments on housing reforms also influenced Geddes, and kindled his desire to improve housing conditions. As Ruskin wrote in **Sesame and Lilies** (1865):

> providing lodging . . . means a great deal of vigorous legislature, a cutting down of vested interests that stand in the way, and . . . thorough sanitary and remedial action in the houses that we have. (XVIII, 183)

Geddes' practical work in housing reform connects Ruskinian theory with twentieth-century change.

Marshall Stalley, in his introduction to **Patrick Geddes, Spokesman for Man and the Environment** (1972), explained that Geddes' writings reflect his concern over "the excesses of commercialism and the futility of greater production of more and more things with the attendant problems of pollution and waste . . . . [Geddes] accepted as a national commitment, the goal of a higher quality of life."{14} Geddes himself praised **The Stones of Venice** and **Seven Lamps of Architecture** for their "achievement" and "enduring value," and he listed Ruskin with Emerson and Carlyle as the authors most significant to his own early education. In the first pages of **Cities of Evolution**, he repeated some of Ruskin's basic tenets:

> the success of industry is ultimately measured neither by the return in wealth of the capitalist nor in money wages of the labourer, nor even by both put together, but in the results of industry upon the concrete environment, the family budget, the home, and the corresponding state of development of the family--its deterioration or progress.{15}

Thus, the writings of both Hobson and Geddes provide evidence that Ruskin's social ideas infiltrated the twentieth century and effected perceptions of society, its functions, and its goals.

More than his influence on either Hobson or Geddes, his influence on William Morris extended far into the next century. Where his influence through Hobson had been on economics and through Geddes on practical reforms, through Morris he affected the developing socialist ideology in Britain. His effects on Fabianism, Socialism, and the Independent Labour Party all parallel those on Morris, who was lastingly influenced by Ruskin's social opinions, especially as they appeared in **Seven Lamps** and **Stones of Venice**. In his early lectures Morris referred constantly to "The Nature of Gothic" which he published separately as a volume of the Kelmscott Press in 1892. In the Preface to this volume he described it as

> one of the most important things written by [Ruskin], and in future days will be considered as one of the very few necessary and inevitable utterances of the century.{16}

In his social thought, Morris took the central theme from this short chapter, that man has a right to experience joy in his work, and not to endure the dehumanizing methods of industrialization, as his own. In comparing the workmen of the Middle Ages with those of the nineteenth century, Morris believed that Ruskin's most important point was "that the social life of the Middle Ages allowed the workman freedom of individual expression, which . . . our social life forbids him."{17}

Like Ruskin's social criticism, Morris's indictment of Victorian society, of its social injustice and its physical and emotional ugliness, follows upon an earlier career concerned mainly with aesthetics.{18} After 1880 Morris wrote his social lectures and articles, and his utopian masterpieces, **A Dream of John Ball** and **News from Nowhere,** which were published serially in the **Commonweal** from 1885 to 1890. In these two works Morris's Utopian view of society was strongly influenced by Ruskin's ideas. **News From Nowhere** depends on the Ruskinian concepts of wealth and riches as touched on in **The King of the Golden River** and as outlined in **A Joy For Ever, Unto This Last, Munera Pulveris,** and **Time and Tide.** Morris's utopian **Nowhere** repeats Ruskin's claim that the true science of political economy is "that which teaches nations to desire and labour for the things that lead to life; and which teaches them to scorn and destroy the things what lead to destruction" (**Unto**; XVII, 168).

Through Morris, however, Ruskin's influence went beyond literary and utopian directions into the world of practical politics. In 1883 Morris joined Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation; and in 1889, as leader of the Socialist League, he attended the founding congress of the Socialist International. In his lectures, "Art and Plutocracy" (1883) and "How I Became a Socialist" (1894), Morris enthusiastically endorsed Ruskin's demand for social affection and distributionist policies as the starting point of his own socialist ideals. In his lecture, "How Shall We Live Then?," written in 1889, Morris explained how Ruskin's perceptions of the working class dilemma allowed real socialism to take root:

> I know that I had come to these conclusions a good deal through reading John Ruskin's works, and that . . . his views on the matter of my work and my rising sense of injustice, probably [did] more than he intended, and that the result of all that was that I was quite ready for Socialism when I came across it as a definite form, as a political party with distinct aims for a revolution in society.{19}

Morris recognized in Ruskin's appeal to the working classes, an influence on socialism at the end of the century.

Though socialists see their beginning in Ruskin's social and economic thought, his opinions on private ownership as expressed several times in **Munera Pulveris** clearly separate Ruskinian and socialist ideologies. In Chapter Two, "Store-Keeping," for example, he wrote that

> the first necessity of all economical government is to secure the unquestioned and unquestionable working of the great law of Property--that a man who works for a thing shall be allowed to get it, keep it, and consume it, in peace; and that he who does not eat his cake to-day, shall be seen, without grudging, to have his cake to-morrow. This, I say, is the first point to be secured by social law . . . . [let] no man's dinner be carried off by the mob, on its way home from the baker's.

Revealing his socialist bent, he added that we must consider the possibility that the mob itself also "have dinners to carry home" (XVII, 192-93). Although Ruskin, himself, never became a Socialist, his views against his capitalistic society were stated almost identically by Marx.{20} Marx, of course, was not influenced by Ruskin's writings, but he and Ruskin were most certainly working out ideologies which touched on the issues of workman's rights and dignity, and capitalism's faults.

The extent, sources, and influence of Morris's socialism, including its relationship to Ruskin's ideas are traced in Paul Meier's lengthy 1975 study, **La Pensée Utopique de William Morris**, translated as **William Morris, The Marxist Dreamer**. Meier was concerned only with the influence leading to Morris's utopian concepts, his hopes and plans for a society emphasizing human values instead of the monetary values of capitalism. As Meier explained:

> I shall extract from the books which directly or indirectly influenced Morris that which deals with the organization and ways of an ideal society . . . . There are, on one hand, innumerable definite suggestions for a future way of life and, on the other, there is a philosophy of history and life upon which the conception of a utopian world is founded . . . . It is the second element which is decisive. This will be apparent when we consider Ruskin and Marx.

Though Meier traced Morris's beginnings in the utopian literature of Plato, Campanella, Thomas More, Samuel Butler, Richard Jeffries, and Edward Bellamy, and though he linked Morris's medievalism and his utopian concepts to Scott, Keats, the Pre-Raphaelites, Blake, Cobbett, and Carlyle, he stressed again and again the social ideology of John Ruskin as having most influenced William Morris's socialism. After all other influences, argued Meier, we

> come to the ideology of Ruskin which was already a synthesis and even more: in fact, it . . . was the original inspiration of Morris's utopianism before it was grafted into the framework of his scientific socialism.{21}

H. M. Pelling expressed a similar opinion in his study, **The Origins of the Labour Party** (1954), claiming that Ruskin introduced Morris to socialism.

Morris deviated from Ruskin in his final lack of faith in the regeneration of the wealthy, ruling classes; instead, like Marx, he entrusted the regeneration of mankind to the working class. Ruskin and Morris, though agreeing about the injustices of the capitalistic and monetary society to which they belonged, took different routes to change that society. Ruskin attempted to change society by inducing men to change themselves voluntarily; Morris turned to politics in an attempt to induce change by undermining the capitalistic ideologies.

Through writers like Morris and, later, George Bernard Shaw, Ruskin's social thought gained credibility and exerted influence on various groups with socialist leanings, in particular the Fabians, the London Trades Council Representation League, The Scottish Labour Party, and, by association with these, the Independent Labour Party of Great Britain. E. R. Pease, historian of the Fabian Movement, suggested, however, that the Fabians were not influenced by Ruskin, because they reacted "against his religious medievalism, and [were indifferent] to his gospel of art." Ruskin's writings, continued Pease, "did not appeal to modernists educated by Comte and Spencer."{22} Note, however, that George Bernard Shaw added in an appendix to Pease's history that "in the Socialist movement workmen turned up who had read **Fors Clavigera** or **Unto This Last**."{23} Though the Fabians seem not to have been directly influenced by Ruskin's social writings, the fact remains that his ideals were their own. Fabians supported distributionist policies, condemned capitalistic economic ideas, and argued for the welfare of all. The original meeting that led to the formation of the Fabians (1883) produced a *Ruskinian* resolution which pointed the way to their political action:

> The members of the Society assert that the competitive system assures the happiness and comfort of the few at the expense of the suffering of the many and that Society must be reconstituted in such a manner as to secure the general welfare and happiness.{24}

George Bernard Shaw was one among the Fabians who championed Ruskin's ideas, acknowledging his debt in **Ruskin's Politics** (1921). Morris, also a Fabian, felt Ruskin's influence in the political thought of the times. He claimed that the utopian hopes of the Fabians "owed more to the aesthetics of Ruskin than to the economics of Marx."{25}

Many of Ruskin's ideas had a bearing on the political process by their encouragement of social and socialist thought and action. D. C. Somervell, in what has become the "classical" exposition, **English Thought in the Nineteenth Century** (1929), asserted that Ruskin "anticipated in many particulars the programmes of the socialists." As he explained, Ruskin

> had schemes for the organization of an inevitably industrialized society, and while some of these schemes are whimsical in the extreme, others are now accepted facts. Ruskin recommended old age pensions, public provision of housing, a state provision against unemployment, and the organized purification of the atmosphere by the control of factory smoke--and also of tobacco smoke, in his programme. He was hardly a socialist in any accepted sense of the word, for he was never a democrat, but . . . he anticipated in many particulars the programmes of the socialists, and he has often been claimed by them as a forerunner of the British socialist movement.{26}

The testimony of those people who were directly influenced by Ruskin's social doctrine is far more significant than retrospective speculation in establishing that his works and ideas had a bearing on actual political process. For example, for Beatrice Webb the origin of socialism was "to be discovered in a new consciousness of sin among men of intellect and men of property; a consciousness at first philanthropic and practical--Oastler, Shaftesbury and Chadwick; then literary and artistic--Dickens, Carlyle, Ruskin and William Morris; and finally, analytic, historical and explanatory--in his latter days John Stuart Mill; Karl Marx and his English interpreters; Alfred Russel Wallace and Henry George; Arnold Toynbee and the Fabians."{27} Ruskin provided a clear link between the practical and the analytical stages in this movement towards socialism. Most clearly he influenced those of the third stage. G. B. Shaw testified that the many extremely revolutionary characters he met in his lifetime, when asked "was it Karl Marx?" who initiated their radicalism, "answered, 'No, it was Ruskin.'"{28} Clement R. Attlee, Labour Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, in his autobiography, wrote that he was an admiring reader of Ruskin and "began to understand his social gospel." After looking into many of Ruskin's ideas for social reform, he "came to the conclusion that the economic and ethical basis of society was wrong" and as a result he became "a socialist."{29}

Hobson outlined the links between Ruskin's doctrines and the precepts of socialism in 1899. He wrote that Ruskin supported the three most distinctive demands of continental socialism: first, the abolition of the "competitive system" of industry for profit under private control, and the substitution for it of publicly organised industry for use; second, the abolition of rent and interest; third, the establishment of a labour-basis of exchange (or, in its simplest terms, one man's hour of work is equal to another's). As noted earlier (Chapter Four), Ruskin's first essay in **Unto This Last**, "The Roots of Honour," is a moral plea for the abolition of profit as an industrial motive, and for the adoption of social service in its place; "this principle," asserted Hobson is "at once the earliest, the most constant, and the most consistent of his social teachings." Hobson went on to explain that "not only is Mr. Ruskin a Socialist in his criticism of competition and profitmongers: he also adopts the corner-stone of the constructive economic theory of Marx and his followers, quantity of labour as the basis of exchange for commodities."{30} In tracing the similarities between Ruskinian and socialist principles, and in examining the influence of Ruskin's writings on socialist thinkers, we must not forget the gulf between Ruskin and true socialism. Ruskin supported the private ownership of property and he recommended a paternalistic hierarchy with the country's natural leaders, the aristocracy according to Ruskin, at the top.

Henry M. Pelling, in **The Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900**, mentioned Ruskin's **Unto This Last** and **Fors Clavigera** as influencing "the growing sentiment in favour of collectivism. They revived, in simple and impressive language, many of the criticisms of classical economics."{31} Though Pelling did not believe that Ruskin's social writings led directly to the formation of the Labour Party, he did, like the writers Morris and Shaw, and the historians Webb and Somervell, see Ruskin's influence in his ability to change attitudes and to inspire thought. Pelling explained:

> Ruskin, indeed, was the great amateur of political economy, but none the less influential for all that. It was not without reason that Keir Hardie and many other labour leaders regarded . . . Ruskin as more important in

> shaping their political views than any writers more fully versed in the abstractions of economic theory.{32}

Pelling, for example, suggested that Letter 89 (1880) of **Fors Clavigera**, addressed to the trade unions, reminded organized workers of their ideals, and perhaps even stirred them to action. Tom Mann, editor of the **Trade Unionist** and one of the main trade-union socialists whose work led to the formation of the London Trades Council Representation League in December 1891, evolved his socialism from reading Ruskin. Mann "knew whole passages of Ruskin by heart and, Donna Torr, Mann's Biographer tells us, it was his reading of Ruskin which prepared him for that of Marx."{33}

The Scottish Labour Party, another political body which later contributed to the formation of the Independent Labour Party, was influenced by Ruskin's social and economic ideas through its affiliation with the Ruskin Societies.{34} Keir Hardie, its founder and parliamentary representative for labour and President of the Independent Labour Party from 1893 till 1900, wrote in the **Labour Leader** (Jan. 1893):

> for a time it seemed as if the labour movement would founder on the rocks of materialism . . . . This, however, was only the surface aspect of the movement. The teachers and prophets of the nineteenth century--Thomas Carlyle, Joseph Mazzini, Walt Whitman, John Ruskin, Alfred Tennyson, and William Morris--taught far otherwise, and their influence has been silently yet forcefully, leavening the minds of men. The great message of their deliverance has been the elevation of the spiritual side of

> man's being, showing how all material things are but useful in so far as they serve to aid in developing character.{35}

Ruskin's social ideals, then, indirectly influenced the formation of Britain's Labour Party by influencing the interest groups and the primary figures leading to its inception in 1893, which in turn led to Labour's first real victory as a viable alternative to the Liberal and Conservative Parties with a win of thirty seats in 1906. E. T. Cook recounted that when these Labour M.P.s were asked what books had most influenced their politics, more said Ruskin's **Unto This Last** than any other.{36}

The influence of Ruskin's social thought, and of **Unto This Last** in particular, was felt far beyond the borders of England in countries as different as the United States, Japan, and India. The letters of **Fors Clavigera** and the principles of St. George's Guild, for example, influenced an American community in the eighteen-nineties. Julius Augustus Wayland, editor of a socialist paper, **The Coming Nation** (1893-97), established a model socialist community called the Ruskin Co-operative Association in Tennessee. Of Ruskin's ideas he wrote:

> I believe that there are no works that will do you as much good as Ruskin's. No family able to buy should be without all of his works. I would much prefer my children to read and *understand* John Ruskin than to win a diploma from Yale, Harvard, or any school for jamming intellects at the expense of intelligence. [**The Coming Nation**, No. 100 (April 20, 1885)]

Though the mention of the fervid exclamations of Wayland

and his less-than-successful Co-operative Association is not made as proof of a major Ruskinian influence in America, Wayland's fervor does indicate the scope of Ruskin's inspiration.{37} Of Ruskin's influence in Japan, Masami Kimura, in "Japanese Interest in Ruskin: Some Historical Trends," explained that from the appearance in 1918 of the first translation of **Unto This Last** (by Kenji Ishida)

> Ruskin began to be very widely known, especially as an important social reformer whose doctrines and prescriptions for reform were not only valid for nineteenth century [sic] Britain but also adaptable to current Japanese social problems, especially after the end of the First World War.{38}

Kimura concisely and convincingly substantiated his claim with the assessments of major political and economic thinkers in twentieth-century Japan. But the highest assessment of Ruskin's social and economic thought outside Britain came from Mahatma Gandhi.

Through Gandhi, Ruskin's social thought reached far beyond the United Kingdom. E. T. McLaughlin, in her study **Ruskin and Gandhi** (1974), traced Gandhi's "dependence on Ruskin as the almost exclusive source of his economic opinions." She demonstrated by references to Gandhi's life and work that "although the practical applications of Gandhian economics reflect traditional Indian ways, the intellectual justifications are consistently Ruskinian.{39} Gandhi listed Ruskin, Tolstoy, and the Indian spiritual leader Raychanbhai as the three moderns who influenced him most deeply. Gandhi acknowledged Ruskin's influence many times throughout his autobiography, **The Story of My Experiments With Truth**, and credited the turning point in his social beliefs to Ruskin's ideas as expressed in **Unto This Last**:

> The one book that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was **Unto This Last** . . . . My belief is that I discovered some of my deepest convictions reflected in this great book of Ruskin.

He continued

> The book was impossible to lay aside, once I had begun it. I determined to change my life in accordance with the ideals of the book.{40}

After reading **Unto This Last** he renounced his profession as a lawyer to live and work with the poor. Gandhi's various experiments in community and rural living, for example Phoenix Farm in South Africa (1900) and the ashram near Ahmedabad (1915), followed the principles outlined in **Unto This Last**. Gandhi wrote a Gujarati paraphrase of **Unto This Last**, entitled **Sarvodaya** (The Welfare of All), which was published in 1908.{41} In 1919 the civil disobedience campaign in India began with the distribution of **Sarvodaya** and **Hind Swaraj** (Indian Home Rule), both at that time outlawed publications. After Gandhi's death in 1948 the **Sarvodaya Samaj** (Society for the Welfare of All) was started at Wardha to continue his work to promote a society like that described by Ruskin in his major social texts.

Gandhi was influenced by both Tolstoy and Ruskin, writers who shared many propositions despite the incompatibility of Tolstoy's anarchism and Ruskin's paternalism. Tolstoy read much of Ruskin and translated many of his works. In an 1899 introduction to one translation Tolstoy wrote:

> John Ruskin is one of the most remarkable men not only of England and of our generation, but of all countries and times. He is one of those rare men who think with their hearts . . . and so he thinks and says what he has himself seen and felt, and what everyone will think and say in the future.
>
> . . . .
>
> In spite of the . . . opposition he still meets with, especially among the orthodox economists who cannot but attack him since he destroys their teaching at its very roots--his fame grows and his thoughts penetrate among the public.{42}

Tolstoy's assessment of Ruskin, like that of Gandhi, testifies to the impact of Ruskin's social thought.

Twentieth-century assessments of Ruskin's social and economic writings by British writers indicate the social changes initiated by Ruskin's ideas. In 1944 J. Howard Whitehouse opened his examination of "Ruskin's Influence To-Day" with a panegyric:

> None of the great reformers of the nineteenth century has had comparable influence upon the social progress of this country; none has inspired such affection; none has offered a more splendid example of courageous disinterested service.{43}

Though his praise sounds like the rant of a hero-worshipper, Whitehouse went on to substantiate his claim with a review of some of the most basic, and now accepted, of Ruskin's social tenets, and a description of the many schemes of practical reform Ruskin recommended. Among the schemes of practical social reform mentioned by Whitehouse are: the Ruskin Drawing School founded at Oxford; the Museum of Saint George founded at Sheffield (Ruskin lectured there and contributed to its holdings); the purchase of land and the establishment of the Guild of Saint George; the donation of drawings and mineral collections to schools and colleges in England, Ireland, and Scotland; the foundation of the Working Men's College for adult education (Ruskin was one of the founders); and the opening of a tax-free shop for the poor because Ruskin was "indignant that the poor should have to pay more in proportion than the wealthy for many taxable items." Whitehouse further asserted that the Parliament of 1944 borrowed from Ruskin's ideas in the area of Social Security, especially in its policies for unemployment, education, and town and country planning.{44}

This claim is comparable to that made by E. J. Morley and Yorke Powell in the Fabian Tract (1917), "John Ruskin and Social Ethics." Morley began:

> Indeed it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that almost every modern measure of social improvement may, either directly or indirectly, trace its origin to the precepts and example of John Ruskin.

She added Powell's claim that

> National Education, National Hygiene, National Dealing with the Housing of the Poor, even National Succour for those who fall by the way in

> the toilsome march of the Army of Labour, National Dealing with Land, National Dealing with Trade, with Colonisation, with all the real National Interests--all these measures, so long denounced without distinction by the old sham political economy of the past, [Ruskin] advocated, and now they are within or at our doors.{45}

These Fabian writers implicitly understood that Ruskin articulated the next generation's political needs and directions in his ideas about social responsibility and their link with governmental distributionist policy.

R. H. Tawney (1880-1962) and his works on social economy perhaps best represent the influence of Ruskin's ideas on the twentieth century. This influence was documented in Ross Terrill's scholarly analysis, **R. H. Tawney and His Times: Socialism as Fellowship** (1973), a title which underlines the importance to Tawney of an attitude of responsibility and caring for one's fellow man. Terrill's synopsis of his thought, giving special attention to **The Acquisitive Society** (1920) and **Religion and the Rise of Capitalism** (1926), recalls the arguments and ideas of Ruskin's works. Terrill's direct references to Ruskin, though minimal, verify Ruskin's influence on Tawney--and through Tawney on the social and economic thought of the twentieth century. As his life and work supported, Tawney, who was a Fabian at the turn of the century, was immersed in the socialism of his times. Terrill's description of him is reminiscent of the many descriptions of Ruskin

> not only a writer but a prophet; a mentor as well as a teacher. Working men went into his WEA [Workers Educational Association's] classes to learn about trade statistics, and left them, as their letters show, with a sense of their dignity as citizens and the sociological imagination and reforming zeal to work not just for better wages but a better society.{46}

When asked who had influenced his ideas, Tawney mentioned Ruskin and William Morris.{47} Both Tawney and Ruskin recognized the tension between economic individualism (supporting capitalism and competition) and the claims of social justice, and both writers built social arguments based on Christian teachings which opposed "the autonomy of economics." Terrill explained that "like Ruskin, [Tawney] characteristically recalled his audience to a light they at least dimly knew," and like Ruskin

> his appeal was to a religious authority or precedent, which had meaning . . . . He used Christian ideals as a measuring rod for what was evil and what was not. Such was his hidden cargo in urging that the "principles on which [the] economic order is founded should justify themselves to the consciences of decent men."{48}

Near the end of his study, Terrill summarized the sources, directions, and import of Tawney's thought:

> If Tawney differed from each major strand of British socialism, he fertilized them all. He is the one twentieth-century British socialist thinker who can be saluted from every corner . . . the philosopher who has most nearly provided an overall framework for socialism in British conditions and according to the British temper.

More significant is Terrill's argument that Tawney's socialism finds

> its twin origins in the concrete organizational

> life of the nineteenth-century British working class, and the critique of British industrialism by Ruskin, Owen and other moralists.{49}

I question Terrill's description of Ruskin as a "moralist" here as well as his earlier derogatory opinion that Ruskin was "an anti-industrial romantic" with "rather hazy views,"{50} especially since he praised Tawney's socialism which, according to his own argument, repeats Ruskin's ideas. And I wonder why Tawney failed to acknowledge Ruskin as an influence.

There is much truth in Douglas R. Cherry's accusation that "Social scientists are not notorious for acknowledging their debts to each other." In "Ruskin--Unacknowledged Legislator of the Social Sciences" (1961), Cherry went on to explain that

> it is not to be expected that they would feel a debt to Ruskin. Some of them are unaware of him; most dismiss him with words which social scientists consider to be interchangeable: *unscientific, literary, romantic.*"{51}

(Terrill's description of Ruskin adds *moral* to this list.) Cherry referred specifically to Tawney's **The Acquisitive Society** and John Kenneth Galbraith's **The Affluent Society** (1958), as two widely read books which develop Ruskin's main ideas while never acknowledging their source (in fact, Galbraith does not even acknowledge Tawney).{52} Quoting judiciously from these two twentieth-century works, Cherry indicated almost word for word repetitions of **A Joy For Ever, Unto This Last**, and **Munera Pulveris**. Tawney and Galbraith both criticized the over-production emphasis of capitalism which overlooks the fact that degrading labour and unwise consumption are social costs. They both stressed the conflict between Mill's "Value in Exchange" and Ruskin's "Value in Use," again without acknowledgement. And they both recognized the wealth of a nation in its people and argued for government responsibility for national policies such as health care and education as an investment in social capital.

Even more than Tawney, Galbraith repeated Ruskin's political-economic tenets. In **The Affluent Society,** Galbraith condemned advertising's role in the problems of over-production and unwise consumption; and drew a picture of society divided between the affluent and the poor. He called for government to take an interventionist role in righting the economic and social disparity.{53} Myron E. Sharpe, in **John Kenneth Galbraith and the Lower Economics** (1973), wrote that Galbraith tried

> to convince the public that the commonly accepted goals of economic growth and full employment . . . are obsolete. The purpose of the economy should not be simply to produce more of anything that happens to get produced. "The question now is *what* we produce and *for whom* and *on what* terms." That chord was first sounded in **The Affluent Society,** an ironic title which describes a society that has the wealth to solve its problems if only it has the will.{54}

I would add that "that chord" was sounded some one hundred years before Galbraith's studies in the pages of Ruskin's social criticism.

Cherry included several other twentieth-century social scientists in his survey of acknowledgement owing to Ruskin's thought, the most notable being Erich Fromm. Fromm's **The Sane Society** (1955) repeats many of the ideas expressed in Ruskin's early social criticism of the fifties and in the political-economic works of the sixties: "'Modern Capitalism,' says Fromm, values things and not people; it stresses ever-increasing production and ignores the capacity to consume wisely; it de-humanizes man . . . . Worst of all, it produces the 'alienated' man, who is characterized by 'dissatisfaction, apathy, boredom, lack of joy and happiness, a sense of futility and a vague feeling that life is meaningless.' Because of capitalism's division of labour, the 'alienated' man does not understand, and has no living relationship to, his work, his fellow men, or the social forces in his environment."{55} In the same way that he preceded Galbraith, Ruskin preceded Fromm in expressing these ideas. His condemnation of Adam Smith's glorification of the division of labour in "The Nature of Gothic" (1853) precisely expresses the concerns articulated a century later in **The Sane Society**

> We have much studied and much perfected, of late, the great civilized invention of the division of labour; only we give it a false name. It is not, truly speaking, the labour that is divided; but the men:--Divided into mere segments of men--broken into small fragments and crumbs of life . . . . And the great cry that rises from all our manufacturing cities, louder than their furnace blast, is all in very deed for this--that

> we manufacture everything except men. (X, 196)

The central doctrines of Tawney, Galbraith, Fromm, and their followers are a testament to the relevance, the logic, the soundness, and the strength of Ruskin's ideas. Cherry rightly bemoaned the fact that so few social and economic thinkers seem aware of or are willing to acknowledge their links with the social thought of John Ruskin. He went further, though, in making the

> more serious charge . . . that Ruskin's economic theory and social criticism have been largely ignored by literary scholars.{56}

Social critics and literary scholars may yet come to appreciate the integrity of Ruskin's social thought and the extent of its influence.{57} The idealistic, humanitarian appeal of his writings inspires change in social, economic, and political attitudes; recall his purpose for writing social criticism:

> I neither wish to please you, nor displease you; but to provoke you to think; to lead you to think accurately; and help you form, perhaps, some different opinions from those you have now. (**Fors** 63; XXVII, 98-99)

Literary critics such as William Morris, George Bernard Shaw, and Leo Tolstoy, politicians and socialists such as Keir Hardie, Clement Attlee, and Mahatma Gandhi, and historians such as Henry M. Pelling, David C. Somervell, and Sidney and Beatrice Webb have attested to the success of Ruskin's purpose. And the sociological concerns and social-economic viewpoint of this century are avowals of the influence of Ruskin's thought which developed from the

"Art Trilogy," through **A Joy For Ever** and the works on political economics, on into the sadly elegiac **Fors Clavigera**.

Notes

1. John A. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer** (1898), pp. 32-33.

2. **Fors Clavigera** was written in conjunction with the founding of St. George's Guild, and recorded the progress, the objectives, and the affairs of the guild members. These references to the Guild form one of the many unifying threads or themes holding the letters together.

3. Paul L. Sawyer, "Ruskin and St. George: The Dragon-killing Myth in 'Fors Clavigera,'" **Victorian Studies**, 23 (Autumn, 1979), 15.

4. John D. Rosenberg, "Ruskin's Benediction: A Reading of **Fors Clavigera**," in **New Approaches to Ruskin** (1981), p. 132.

5. During his years as Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford, Ruskin wrote a remarkable number of books, and collected and published several volumes of his lectures. In particular are his disciplined series on the properties of art, **Lectures on Art** (1870); a volume entitled **Ariadne Florentina** (1873-76) on engraving; his lectures on ornithology, **Love's Meinie** (1873); lectures on geology, **Deucalion** (1875-83); a volume on botany, **Proserpina** (1875-86); **Mornings in Florence** (1875-77), a study of Giotto; **St. Mark's Rest** (1877-84), an unfinished essay on Venice; **Turner: The Harbours of England: Catalogues and Notes** (1878); and **The Bible of Amiens** (1880-85), a history of northern Gothic.

6. Brian Maidment, in "Ruskin, **Fors Clavigera** and Ruskinism, 1870-1900," in **New Approaches to Ruskin,** suggested several reasons for this rise in popularity. Maidment rightly connected the popularity of Ruskin's ideas to "the power of his followers, and perhaps most of all [to] the changing sense of the possibilities and failures of industrialism and political economy" (p. 195). Also, Maidment pointed out that Ruskin's works were available in cheap editions later in the century, thus promoting a larger readership which led to the formation of Ruskin Societies and Ruskin Reading Guilds in the eighteen-eighties and nineties.

7. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer,** p. v.

8. George Bernard Shaw, **Ruskin's Politics,** The Ruskin Centenary Council (1921), p. 8.

9. In some ways the following discussion of the influence of Ruskin's social thought is derivative. Studies have appeared in which his influence on specific historical figures or movements has been traced. Most notable are studies linking Ruskin to Morris, to British Socialism, and, more recently, to Mahatma Gandhi. In addition are the numerous references to Ruskin in studies of the political developments at the turn-of-the-century.

My own examination of such material combined with my analysis of Ruskin's social thought and my research of trends in social, economic, and political thought following the appearance of his writings reveals the extent of his influence on the thinkers, writers, and reformers in social, economic, and political fields. It also suggests instances in which twentieth-century views similar to, but independent of, Ruskin's ideas have developed and been accepted as rational expressions of social thought. Such instances support the strength and logic of Ruskin's own arguments.

10. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer,** pp. 308-09.

11. James Clark Sherburne, **John Ruskin or the Ambiguities of Abundance: A Study in Social and Economic Criticism** (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Un. Pr., 1972), p. 202.

12. G. D. H. Cole, "John A. Hobson," **New Statesman,** 56 (July 5, 1958), 12.

13. Patrick Geddes, "Cities in Evolution," in **Patrick Geddes: Spokesman for Man and the Environment,** ed. Marshall Stalley (New Jersey: Rutgers Un. Pr., 1972), p. 273.

14. Marshall Stalley, "Introduction" to **Patrick Geddes,** p. xi.

15. Geddes, "Cities in Evolution," pp. 341; 372; 31.

16. William Morris, "Preface" to the Kelmscott Press, **Nature of Gothic,** as quoted by Paul Meir [**William Morris: The Marxist Dreamer,** trans. by Frank Gubb from the original **La Pensée Utopique de William Morris** (1972) (Sussex: The Harvester Pr., 1978), p. 126]. Bradley's view of this chapter was similar to Morris's. In **An Introduction to Ruskin** (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), Bradley wrote that "The Nature of Gothic" is "a vital Victorian document as pertinent to an awareness of the age as, say, **Sartor Resartus, In Memoriam,** or **Middlemarch**" (p. 46).

17. Morris, "The Revival of Architecture" (1888), in **The Collected Works of William Morris**, ed. May Morris, 24 vols., Vol. XXII (London: Longmans Green, 1910-15), 323.

18. Jeffrey L. Spear, in "Political Questing: Ruskin, Morris and Romance," in **New Approaches to Ruskin**, compared the two careers of Ruskin and Morris (pp. 174-76) discussing the basic differences in their social thought (pp. 177-93).

19. Morris, "How Shall We Live Then?" (1889), pp. 9-10; a lost manuscript located by Paul Meier in the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam (see Meier, **William Morris**, p. 162).

20. Meier, **William Morris**, p. 152.

21. Meier, **William Morris**, pp. 55 and 95.

22. E. R. Pease, **The History of the Fabian Society** (London: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1916), p. 27. Pease was secretary to the Fabian Society.

23. G. B. Shaw, Appendix I to Pease's **History of the Fabian Society**, p. 278.

24. Pease, **History of the Fabian Society**, p. 32.

25. Meier, **William Morris**, p. 152.

26. D. C. Somervell, **English Thought in the Nineteenth Century** (London: Methuen and Co, 1929), pp. 37 and 152-53.

27. Beatrice Webb, **My Apprenticeship** (London: Longmans, 1926), pp. 178-80.

28. George Bernard Shaw, **Ruskin's Politics**, The Ruskin Centenary Council (Oxford Univ. Pr., 1921), p. 8.

29. C. R. Attlee, **As It Happened** (London: W. Heinemann, 1954), p. 21.

30. Hobson, **John Ruskin: Social Reformer**, p. 179. For further discussion on these points read Chapter VIII, "Socialism and Aristocracy," pp. 176-209. In pages 176 to 182 Hobson outlined the similarities in Ruskinian and socialist thought and indicated those areas of thought where Ruskin's thought deviates from socialism.

31. Henry M. Pelling, **The Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900** (Oxford: Claredon Pr., 1965), p. 11.

32. Pelling, **The Origins of the Labour Party**, p. 11.

33. Meier, **William Morris: The Marxist Dreamer**, p. 149. Also see Donna Torr, **Tom Mann and His Times** (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1956), pp. 80-83; and Pelling, **Origins of the Labour Party**, p. 82.

34. Pelling, **Origins of the Labour Party**, p. 102.

35. Keir Hardie, **Labour Leader** (Jan. 1893); quoted in Pelling, **Origins of the Labour Party**, p. 140.

36. E. T. Cook, **The Life of John Ruskin**, Vol. II (London: George Allen and Col, 1911), 14.

37. Charles H. Kegel, in "Ruskin's St. George in America," **American Quarterly**, IX, no. 4 (Winter, 1957), 412-20, described Wayland's socialist community.

38. Masami Kimura, "Japanese Interest in Ruskin: Some Historical Trends," in **Studies in Ruskin: Essays in Honor of Van Akin Burd** (1982), p. 229.

39. Elizabeth T. McLaughlin, **Ruskin and Gandhi** (London: Associated Univ. Presses, 1974), p. 23.

40. Mohandas K. Gandhi, **Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth**, trans. Mahadev Desai (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Pr., 1954), pp. 363-65; C. F. Andrews ed., **Mahatma Gandhi: His Own Story** (New York: Macmillan, 1930), p. 163.

41. Gandhi, **Sarvodaya** (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1908); trans. Mahadev Desai (Ahmedabad: Navijivan, 1951). See McLaughlin, **Ruskin and Gandhi**, pp. 25-28, for a comparison of Gandhi's paraphrase with the original text of **Unto This Last**.

42. Leo Tolstoy, **Recollections and Essays**, trans. A. Maude (London: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1937), p. 188.

43. J. H. Whitehouse, "Ruskin's Influence To-Day," **Contemporary Review**, 165 (1944), 105.

44. Whitehouse, "Ruskin's Influence," p. 107.

45. E. J. Morley, ed., "John Ruskin and Social Ethics," Biographical Series No. 6, Tract 179 (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1917), pp. 9-10.

46. Ross Terrill, **R. H. Tawney and His Times: Socialism as Fellowship** (Massachusetts: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1973), p. 6.

47. Terrill, **R. H. Tawney**, p. 30.

48. Terrill, **R. H. Tawney**, p. 200; pp. 247-48. The quotation is taken from Tawney, **The Acquisitive Society** (London: Collins, 1961), p. 13.

49. Terrill, **R. H. Tawney**, p. 277.

50. Terrill, **R. H. Tawney**, p. 165.

51. Douglas R. Cherry, "Ruskin--Unacknowledged Legislator of the Social Sciences," in **Thought from the Learned Societies of Canada 1961** (Toronto: W. J. Gage Ltd., 1961), p. 79.

52. Cherry, "Ruskin--Unacknowledged Legislator," pp. 83-85.

To Tawney and Galbraith's works may be added D. M. Fox's study, **The Discovery of Abundance: Simon N. Patten and the Transformation of Social Theory** (1967). In Sherburne's **Ambiguities of Abundance** Fox's book is described as the study to examine for "readers wishing to pursue the development and implications of Ruskin's perception in the twentieth century" (p. 312). Sherburne listed the following as studies with a similar theme: Chase Stuart, **The Economy of Abundance** (New York: Macmillan, 1934); John A. Hobson, **Poverty in Plenty** (New York: Macmillan, 1931); Gunnar Myrdal, **Challenge to Affluence** (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964); and David Potter, **People of Plenty** (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Pr., 1954). (For a more complete bibliography on this topic see Sherburne, pp. 312-13.)

53. Galbraith's economic thought has met with much criticism. Sir Frank McFadzean and Milton Friedman, defenders of the free enterprise non-interventionist policies of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan respectively, and both strong supporters of "Big Business" economics, have been among Galbraith's most vocal and most harsh critics. McFadzean, in **The Economics of John Kenneth Galbraith: A Study in Fantasy** (London: Centre for Policy Studies, 1977), wrote

> It was once said of Hegel that he set out his philosophy with such obscurity that people finished by thinking it profound. A similar accusation could well be levelled at John Kenneth Galbraith. (p. 1)

Friedman, in **Friedman on Galbraith and on Curing the British Disease** (Canada: The Fraser Institute, 1977), supported his arguments against Galbraith with quotations from Adam Smith's **Wealth of Nations** which, he explained, offers "the only method of social and economic organization," for the present age (p. 34). His rationale for opposing Galbraith's social economic thought--which might well be his argument against Ruskin's--is the following sophism:

> In *economics* those people who attempt to pursue only their own self-interest are led by an invisible hand to promote the *public* interest. In the *political* sphere individuals like Galbraith who attempt to pursue the public interest as they view it are led by an invisible hand to further *private* interests which it is no part of their intention to promote. (p. 35)

Friedman's argument forms an inexcusable rationalization unmatched by Ruskin's severest critics. And, yet, Friedman belongs to the popular economic stance of today against Galbraith's *unorthodox* position.

54. Myron E. Sharpe, **John Kenneth Galbraith and the Lower Economics** (White Plains, New York: International Arts and Sciences Pr., Inc., 1973), p. x.

55. Cherry, "Ruskin--Unacknowledged Legislator," p. 89; references taken from Erich Fromm's, **The Sane Society** (New York: Fawcett Premier, 1955), p. 295.

56. Cherry, "Ruskin--Unacknowledged Legislator," p. 79.

57. Robert Hewison, in his "Afterword" to **New Approaches to Ruskin** (1981), called attention to the "flourishing Ruskin Association that reflects the Ruskin 'industry' that has grown up as more and more studies of his work are published." He properly added that "for the sake of Ruskin's ideas, and for a truthful apprehension of the nineteenth century, it is entirely right that this should be so" (p. 228).

AFTERWORD

Ruskin's social thought embraces hopes and remedies for an increased humanity in the face of an industrial world built on the principles of competition and capitalism. As this study indicates, his ideas clearly belong to the mainstream of nineteenth-century social and political debate. And his social criticism forms a bridge between the Coleridgian-transcendental reaction to utilitarianism and the socialist directions of the early twentieth century. Ruskin's position is defined by his demand for social responsibility on the part of individuals and governments alike. His analysis and criticism of the nineteenth-century economic and political system are directly related to this demand. An economic stance that supported self-interest and non-interventionist political policy was necessarily condemned by a man arguing for social affection. Of the economists and political thinkers who supported competition and self-interest rather than co-operation and responsibility Ruskin wrote:

> if they can see nothing in Heaven above the chimney tops, nor conceive of anything in spirit greater than themselves, it is not because they have more knowledge than I, but because they have less sense.

> Less *common*-sense,--observe: less practical insight into the things which are of instant and constant need to man.
> **(Fors 88** (1880); XXIX, 386)

He stressed the need for industry and government to be based on principles of co-operation and service for the common good, for "the welfare of all."

The result of sound social and economic policy, Ruskin always claimed, is much more than material profit or mercantile wealth. Northrop Frye, in his **Anatomy of Criticism** (1957), linked Ruskin's claims to the archetypal meaning of wealth. In an analysis of the stages of the hero's life, Frye pointed out that the first stage, birth, often finds the hero in an ark or chest floating on the sea (for example, the story of Perseus or of Moses). Frye went on to explain that

> psychologically, this image is related to the embryo in the womb . . . anthropologically, it is related to the image of seeds of new life buried in a dead world of snow or swamp. The dragon's treasure hoard is closely linked with this mysterious infant life enclosed in a chest. The fact that the real source of wealth is potential fertility or new life, vegetable or human, runs through romance from ancient myths to Ruskin's **The King of the Golden River** [1841].{1}

Frye stated that "Ruskin's treatment of wealth in his economic works is essentially a commentary on this fairy tale." I add that Ruskin's insistence that society see true wealth in the lives of its citizens is linked to **The King of the Golden River** in the same way that it is linked to the archetypal suggestion that wealth is life. The fact that Ruskin wrote the fairy tale at the early age of twenty-two indicates, as does my analysis of the art trilogy in chapter three, that the value he put on happy, healthy human life in all of his writings--aesthetic, social, economic,and political--stands as a unifying theme in the large body of his works.

Though Hobson, Harrison, and Geddes saw Ruskin as an economist, and Morris, Shaw, and the Webbs saw him as a precursor to socialism his thought encompasses a range of subjects extending beyond these specialized and limiting studies to include art, science, economics, religion, mythology, and literature. He was a thinker of a stature greater than that suggested by the words "economist" or "social critic": as a critic he was original, intuitive, and open-minded, able to observe and understand the strengths and faults of his society and able to offer advice that the future would prove to be sound; as a political economist he articulated the relationship between economics and social justice that would become the cornerstone of the twentieth-century argument against economic individualism; as a humanist he foresaw the alienation of twentieth-century man, the loss of man's capacity to feel, to imagine, and to create. And as a writer he was both poet and master of prose. The larger themes of Ruskin's writings--that true wealth is life; that man's work should be happy and healthy; that all men should be given the chance for advancement in life (a theme linked to his ideas on training guilds, education, fair wages, and the redistribution of wealth); and that all men have the right to food, lodging, and health care--form the link between his ideas and their twentieth-century counterparts in both the social sciences and the humanities.

To the end of his career Ruskin assessed his social ideas as the most consistent and purposeful in all his work. In **Catalogues and Notes** (1878), he summized:

> the truths I have been endeavouring to teach during these last seven years in **Fors Clavigera** were as clearly established in my mind, and as strongly expressed, in the close of my first work, as they will be, with God's help, in whatever He appoints to be my last. (XIII, 496-97){2}

Praeterita (1885-89), Ruskin's autobiography, remained to be written. As in **Fors** here again he assessed his social thought as the central concern in his writings. Describing the Contesse des Roys, Princess Bethune, and their husbands he wrote:

> the way in which these lords . . . and their wives . . . spoke of their Spanish labourers and French tenantry, with no idea whatever respecting them but that, except as producers by their labour of money to be spent in Paris, they were cumberers of the ground, gave me the first clue to the real source of wrong in the social laws of modern Europe; and led me necessarily into the political work which has been the most earnest of my life. (XXXV, 408-09)

This meeting with his father's business associates in 1843 had early indicated the need for social affection and social responsibility, the arguments which grew into "the most earnest work of [his] life."

The advice Ruskin offered, the warnings he articulated, and the hopes he expressed consistently reflect his concern with the human condition--with the protection and advancement of man's physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Together, the art trilogy- **Seven Lamps, Stones of Venice** and **Modern Painters--A Joy For Ever,** the works on political economy--**Unto This Last, Munera Pulveris**and**Time and Tide**--and **Fors Clavigera** embody a social vision founded on the traditions of transcendentalism, humanism, and Christianity:

> the reader will find one consistent purpose, and perfectly conceived system [in Ruskin's social thought] . . . ; including in its balance one vast department of human skill,--the arts,--which the vulgar economists are wholly incapable of weighing; and a yet more vast realm of human enjoyment--the spiritual affections,--which materialist thinkers are alike incapable of imagining: a system not [Ruskin's], nor Kant's, nor Comte's;--but that which Heaven has taught every true man's heart, and proved by every true man's work, from the beginning of time to this day. **(Fors 88; XXIX, 383)**

Dictated by "common sense," the social thought of John Ruskin is, in its simplest terms, an argument for

> common equity, common humanity, and common sunshine . . . . (**Fors 88;** 384)

Notes

1. Northrop Frye, "Archetypal Criticism: Theory of Myths," **Anatomy of Criticism. Four Essays** (Princeton: Univ. Pr., 1957), p. 198; and Ruskin, **The King of the Golden River**; I, 305-54.

2. Ruskin, "On His Own Handiwork Illustrative of Turner, Exhibited at the Fine Art Society's Galleries, 1878," taken from Part III of **Catalogues and Notes**, entitled "Turner's Works at the National Gallery"; XIII, 490-503.

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APPENDIX I

Ruskin's Position on Democracy

Ruskin's notion of a just political system is not simply a radicalization of democracy. In his social writings,"liberty," "equality," and "democracy" together connote a system of anarchy, not of healthy freedom. Never a champion of democracy, he deplored the rationale behind the Reform Bill of 1867. He believed that the "best men" will not rule if leaders are chosen by the masses, many of whom are not able to make wise choices; he also warned that if party leaders have to commit themselves to a mass electorate, they will be forced to compromise in all decisions because of their concern for popular opinion instead of for what is best. Many others, most notably Carlyle, felt as Ruskin did; George Watson,in **The English Ideology** (1973), asserted that a primary misunderstanding in studying Victorian politics is the assumption that the Victorians believed democracy to be the best form of government.{1} George Bernard Shaw explained that Ruskin "realized that government had to be the work of an energetic, conscientious minority" but that he also realized the danger: "a minority may convince society that what they want for their own advantage is for the good of society." Shaw, like Ruskin, denounced the idea that men are all equally capable of governing themselves. He added that "to tell the people to make their own laws is to mock them just as I should mock you if I said, "Gentlemen: you are the people; write your own plays." The people are the judges of the laws and the plays; but they can never be the makers of them."{2}

Ruskin also believed that the party system of government as it existed in 1867 was destructive to just, moral, and socially effective political action. In commenting on the Liberal-Conservative Party government, he wrote:

> As you would find it thus impossible to class me justly in either party, so you would find it impossible to class any person whatever, who had clear and developed political opinions, and who could define them accurately. Men only associate in parties by sacrificing their opinions, or by having none worth sacrificing; and the effect of party government is always to develope [sic] hostilities and hypocrisies and to extinguish ideas.

In a further comment on the Government of the late eighteen-sixties he wrote:

> In the meantime Parliament is a luxury to the British squire, and an honour to the British manufacturer, which you may leave them to enjoy in their own way; provided only you make them always clearly explain, when they tax you, what they want with your money. (**Fors**, Letter 1; XXVII, 15)

In view of his derogatory opinions it is understandable that Ruskin never took an active part in government as a member of parliament nor ever associated himself with the opinions of one party against those of another.

Liberty and equality, the guarantees of democracy, were constant targets of Ruskin's derision. He described liberalism as anarchy masquerading among the masses; as he said in **The Stones of Venice**, government will not be able to provide for the social needs of the people (including education, health, and work) until it has "authority over them." The Fabians borrowed heavily from Ruskin. In Tract No. 70 (1896) they wrote: "man must be changed from a free being at liberty to seek his own profit into a member of a planned society that obliges all to act unselfishly."{3} Ruskin stressed the need for co-operation in allowing those best suited to govern. "If there be any one point insisted on throughout my works," wrote Ruskin, "that one point is the impossibility of Equality. My continual aim has been to show the eternal superiority of some men to others . . . and to show also the advisability of appointing such persons or person to guide, to lead, or on occasion even to compel and subdue, their inferiors according to their own better knowledge and wiser will" (**Unto This Last**; XVII, 74-75). Though the dangers of such a position are obvious from a twentieth-century point of view, we must remember that Ruskin's sole motivation for his advice was moral; a Christian concern for all members of society was always his primary goal. That is, he argued for people's freedom to enjoy not only the physical necessities of life, but also to pursue their intellectual and spiritual needs. Democracy, he believed, works against such a goal, as does an economical system based on the profit motive and activated by self-interest. In his lecture on Ruskin's political ideas, Shaw quoted Lenin as saying that all "governing people who have practical experience of State Affairs know that the people, for good or evil, must, whether they will or no, be finally governed by people capable of governing, and that the people themselves know this instinctively, and mistrust all democratic doctrinaires."{4} More than fifty years earlier Ruskin expressed the same belief.

Ruskin described himself as a Tory Radical: "Radical, everyman his chance; Tory, everyman his rank" (II, 167). Shaw called Ruskin a Tory in the sense that "the Tory is a man who believes that those who are qualified by nature and training for public work, and who are naturally a minority, have to govern the mass of the people."{5} In **Dreamers of Dreams** (1957), Holbrook Jackson commented that "however loudly he [called] himself Tory [Ruskin's] teaching is fundamentally socialist,"{6} and so represented radical ideas. J. B. Conacher, in **Waterloo to the Common Market** (1975), compared Ruskin to Disraeli whom he called "both a Radical and a Conservative." In 1872 Disraeli said that a Conservative government under his leadership would maintain British institutions, would uphold the empire, and would elevate the condition of the people.{7} Ruskin's main concern involved only the last of Disraeli's proposals (though he would agree with all three), and never with Disraeli's hopes for a democratic system of government. In discussing Disraeli, Conacher described a small number of Tory Radicals resembling Ruskin,

> who demanded the repeal of the obnoxious Poor Law and favored social legislation to ameliorate the lot of the oppressed urban poor. Their view of society was paternalistic, and they tended to despise and mistrust political economists, factory owners, and everyone associated with the Industrial Revolution. The most articulate espousal of these ideas came from a small group of young aristocrats who called themselves Young England. Their inspiration was Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), the strange young novelist, who, after failing to get elected as a Radical, entered parliament as the protege of a Tory Aristocrat. Disraeli [like Ruskin] . . . had a genuine contempt for the doctrinaire approach to politics of the economists and the Benthamites. He was a strange mixture of cynicism and romanticism, and the latter was the main strain in the short-lived Young England movement.{8}

Ruskin's Tory Radicalism, though, was neither cynical nor short-lived. His moral idealism appealed to the emotions of the socially concerned reformers of the later nineteenth century, while his plans for practical change in economics, education, and other social areas, and in politics appealed to sociologists and politicians alike in the twentieth century.

Notes

1. George Watson, **The English Ideology: Studies in the Language of Victorian Politics** (London: Allen Lane, 1973), p. 1.

2. George Bernard Shaw, **Ruskin's Politics** (Oxford: Univ. Pr., 1921), pp. 24-25.

3. George Bernard Shaw, **Report on Fabian Policy and Resolutions**, Tract No. 70, presented to the International Socialist Workers and Trade Union Congress (London: Fabian Society, 1896), p. 3.

4. Shaw, **Report on Fabian Policy**, p. 30.

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6. Holbrook Jackson, **Dreamers of Dreams: The Rise and Fall of Nineteenth-century Idealism** (New York: Farrar, Straus & Co., 1957), p. 121.

7. J. B. Conacher, **Waterloo to the Common Market**, The Borzoi History of England ed., Vol. V: 1815 - Present (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), 124-31.

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APPENDIX II

Turner's Truth to Nature

The primary basis for Ruskin's analysis of Turner, apart from examining Turner's works, was his own scientific study. This point cannot be over stressed. Ruskin studied science--geology, botany, meteorology--throughout his life and knew and understood the principles and laws which governed nature. He devoted nearly half of **Modern Painters** to an explanation of natural law in land forms, water, cloud formations, and plant life. Ruskin always examined nature at first hand, making sketches and notes of what he saw. This first-hand view forms the basis of comparison for descriptions of Turner's works. In **Modern Painters** and other writings on art Ruskin compared Turner's drawing of nature to nature herself. He saw the development of Turner's works in their ever-approaching truth to nature. He compared the lines, forms, lights, and colours of Turner's works to lines, forms, lights, and colours in nature and concluded that they were the same. This is the method used for criticizing Turner throughout **Modern Painters** and in the various catalogues written for exhibitions of Turner's works.

Ruskin's conclusion that Turner is true to nature does not rest solely on his study and observation of nature. He studied other facets of art and art history as well, but found no significant similarity to Turner. Though he did not discuss the abstraction of colour and form in Turner's works he was aware of such abstraction in art. In fact he devoted time and study to the question of colour independent of form, and form independent of colour and object. Ruskin discussed the abstraction of line in his studies of architecture and of colour and form in **The Elements of Drawing** (1857). He wrote to his students in **Elements** that though they may not be able to produce coloured drawings of any real value they may gain pleasure "by occasionally sketching with a view to colour only," and continued:

> though of course you should always give as much form to your subject as your attention to its colour will admit of, remember that the whole value of what you are about depends, in a coloured sketch, on the colour merely . . . . Give up all form, rather than the slightest part of the colour . . . . Never mind though your houses are all tumbling down,--though your clouds are mere blots, and your trees mere knobs, and your sun and moon like crooked sixpences,--so only that trees, clouds, houses, and sun or moon, are of the right colours. (XV, 134-35)

This awareness that colour can exist apart from form illustrates that Ruskin did not avoid such questions in his study of art. However, even after writing **The Elements of Drawing** Ruskin looked at Turner and saw truth to nature in form, line, and colour. He wrote Volumes

Four and Five of **Modern Painters** in 1856 and 1860, in other words at the very time that he was talking of abstraction in colour, but, as these two volumes show, he did not see abstraction in Turner. Rather, he reasserted his finding of 1843, that Turner's works illustrate nature accurately.

In Part II of **Modern Painters** I, Ruskin was at some pains to explain the relative importance of various "truths" before he looked at Turner. He wrote that "in judging of the truth of painters, we shall have to consider not only the accuracy with which individual truths are given, but the relative importance of the truths themselves; for as it constantly happens that the powers of art are unable to render **all** truths, that artist must be considered the most truthful who has preserved the most important at the expense of the most trifling" (III, 149). He concluded that the greatest pictures exhibit the general habits of nature, manifested in some particular, rare, and beautiful way, and that within these pictures a series of truths are properly ordered.

Ruskin presented a brief analysis of Turner's development at the end of this discussion of the relative importance of various truths. He saw Turner gradually moving closer to depicting nature according to her laws and to capturing those things most rare and beautiful in nature while choosing the most important truths first. He pointed to Turner's early **Yorkshire** drawings and engravings in the **Liber Studiorm** as works which indicate one of the culminating points in Turner's career. These works show little concern for creating effect; instead they represent the simple seeking of truth: Turner drew what he saw in nature.

Yet, according to Ruskin's analysis, the full character and capacity of the painter are not apparent at this point. Turner experimented with colour in his later works and painted subjects outside of England. For a time in Ruskin's view, Turner moved away from truth, especially in his Italian watercolours (c. 1819) in which accuracy of form was completely lost to a brilliancy of effect. But Ruskin pointed out that Turner was able to recognize his error. "It was impossible for him, with all his keen and long disciplined perceptions, not to feel that the real colour of nature had never been attempted," Ruskin observed, adding, "For the conventional colour he substituted a pure straightforward rendering of fact" (III, 245). The true colours of nature are much lighter than the colours landscape painters before Turner had given her. Ruskin viewed the works of the late eighteen-thirties and the early eighteen-forties [**Slave Ship** (1840), **The Fighting Téméraire** (1839)] as Turner's best. These were the ones in which his "hand became more free, his perception and grasp of the new truths (including true colour) more certain, and his choice of subject more adapted to the exhibition of them" (III, 249). He pointed specifically to the Swiss drawings of 1842 and to several Venetian subjects, including **Venice from Fusina** (1844), as works most true to nature.

In the three chapters on the truths of tone, colour, and chiaroscuro, Ruskin compared the system of colour used by earlier artists with Turner's development in colour and with the colours of nature. His most remarkable observation concerned the great intensity and light in nature's colours. Ruskin was convinced that Turner's colours were not understood or that they were thought to be unnaturally bright by people who had not observed nature. He pointed out how much brighter the colours of a sunset are than the colours of Turner's sky in his **Fighting Téméraire**. Nature's colours can never be depicted in all of their true brilliance because man's imitations cannot approach her light. Because only Turner had attempted to produce nature's light, his works are closer to presenting the truth of nature's colours than those of all other landscape artists.

More significant for an understanding of the "truths" Ruskin saw in Turner's late works (which modern critics see as abstract and formless) is his discussion of "Truth of Space." According to Ruskin, Turner alone had recognized that space must be studied as dependent on the focus of the eye. He pointed out that the eye cannot focus simultaneously on near objects and distant objects. Thus creating a sharp focus across an entire canvas is a major error in the old masters' depiction of natural scenery; they painted entire scenes with detail in foreground and background. To Ruskin, such a view is unacceptable because it is not truthful to observation. An artist interested in focusing on an object such as a tree or plant close to the viewer must paint only that object clearly; if interested in focusing on the middleground or background, he can allow greater depth of focus:

> In a real landscape, we can see the whole of what would be called the middle distance and distance together, with facility and clearness; but while we do so, we can see nothing in the foreground beyond a vague and indistinct arrangement of lines and colours; and that if, on the contrary, we look at any foreground object, so as to receive a distinct impression of it, the distance and middle distance becomes all disorder and mystery. (III, 320-21)

Turner's use of this fact, together with Ruskin's perception of it, heralded a new era in landscape art. Ruskin noted, too, that Turner did not depict carelessly areas which are out of focus, but drew them "by the most precise and beautiful indication or suggestion of just so much of even the minutest forms as the eye can see when its focus is not adapted to them" (III, 324). As well as being dependent on the focus of the eye, the depiction of space is dependent on the power of the eye; no matter how close an object is, the eye cannot see all parts of it clearly, and no matter how far away an object is, there is always some distinguishable feature which the eye picks up. Ruskin concluded that "in art, every space or touch in which we see everything, or in which we can see nothing, is false" (III,329).

Turner again showed recognition of these observations in his art. Ruskin justified Turner's late works as being true to nature according to his recognition of the optics of seeing space. The focus of Turner's **Norham Castle** (1845), for example, is on the sun, and therefore only suggestions of foreground and middleground forms are given. Furthermore, the range of this focus leaves most of the surrounding foreground objects indistinct, though the castle, the banks, and the landforms are distinguishable. Such vision, according to Ruskin, is true to nature. For the most part Ruskin, to this point in his discussion, was not dealing with "truth to nature" in an external sense as much as with the facts of human perception, especially the optical qualities of the human eye, which are not different from those of any comparable lense, for example, a camera. However, without specific knowledge of optics, Ruskin and Turner discovered these qualities simply by observing nature and depicting her accurately; recording exactly what they saw not what they thought they saw. This same power of accurate observation is essential to Ruskin's social criticism.

Finally, Ruskin examined four major areas of nature: skies, earth, water, and vegetation. He asserted that only after particular conditions and laws of nature are recognized, can the reader appreciate the importance of the truths of colour, form, and space in Turner's works and their dependence on truth to natural observation and understanding. Throughout these four sections Ruskin referred repeatedly to Turner's works as the most accurate representations of all that Ruskin found in nature. Ruskin's explications of natural phenomena reflect his own training and reveal Turner's art through the eyes of a scientist and an artist; Turner's truth to nature is boldly asserted. In these last four major sections of Volume One, Ruskin undertook that task which he set himself in the preface: by a thorough investigation of actual facts he argued that Turner painted more of nature than any man who ever lived.

The same pattern of investigation is used in each section; that is, Ruskin discovered or pointed out certain characteristics in nature which are difficult to notice without either scientific knowledge or the ability to recognize scientific law by observation. Then he looked at Turner's works and found the same characteristics. In the section "Of Truth of Skies," for example, Ruskin devoted a chapter to the examination of open skies, cirrus clouds, the central cloud region, and rain clouds. He used technical and accurate language in discussing the various characteristics of these elements of sky. Selecting a particular phenomenon in nature and in Turner, he attempted to explain Turner's truthfulness:

> But there is a series of phenomena connected with the open sky, which we must take especial notice of, as it is of constant occurrence in the works of Turner . . ., namely, of visible sunbeams. (III, 352)

Ruskin went on to explain the occurrence of sunbeams and then pointed out the absence of this natural knowledge in the works of the old masters. Turner, though, "our great modern master," had seen all that Ruskin pointed out. He attributed the inability of the previous landscape painters to draw nature's skies truly to their "feebly developed intelligence, and ill-regulated observation" (III, 354). He attacked these early landscape painters on the same grounds as those on which he attacked Turner's critics; they had neither looked at nor understood nature. (Later he would attack politicians and economists for not looking at or understanding the needs of society.)

A similarly analytical approach is taken in the examination of cirrus cloud. Ruskin discussed the symmetry, the delicacy of form, the variety of form, the quality of mist, and the colour of the upper clouds, at all times stressing the importance of close observation. Again the absence of true representation of clouds in previous landscapes is set against the "intense and constant study of them by Turner" (III, 363). For Ruskin, Turner was the only "master" who had seen and drawn clouds as they are. Each of Turner's works, he wrote, captured the most prominent characteristics of cloud formation: sometimes his clouds come out of

> misty shade, as in the **Mercury and Argus**; sometimes, where great repose is to be given, they appear in a few detached, equal, rounded flakes . . . as in the **Acro-Corinth**; sometimes they are scattered in fiery flying fragments, each burning with separate energy, as in the **Téméraire**. (III, 364)

As an illustration of all that he knew of clouds generally, Ruskin examined the sky in Turner's **Babylon**:

> He gives us a drift of dark elongated vapour, melting beneath into a dim haze which embraces the hills on the horizon. It is exhausted with its own mass into numberless groups of billowy and tossing fragments . . . . [The] eye goes back to a broad sea of white illuminated mist, or rather cloud melted into rain . . . . Beyond these, again, rises a colossal mountain of grey cumulus, through whose shadowed sides the sunbeams penetrate in dim, sloping, rain-like shafts . . . . Above, the edgy summit of the cumulus, broken into fragments, recedes into the sky . . . .
>
> Now this is nature! (III, 382-83)

Turner's depiction of the sky is described in detail and is equated with nature's sky. In such descriptions Ruskin tried to impress upon his readers that, unlike all landscape painters before him, Turner had taken the time to observe nature carefully and that he possessed the artistic power to draw what he observed.

Ruskin was prepared to go even further to show his readers how accurate Turner's depictions of landforms are. Ruskin studied geology, minerals, and the formation of land throughout his life and was always amazed by Turner's depiction of the very geological laws he had observed. In Volume One of **Modern Painters** he pointed out the incredible powers of Turner in this matter of geological truth. One of the most outstanding realizations for Ruskin was that Turner was able to draw so accurately the lines of land formations and rock forms without the intense background studies in science completed by Ruskin himself. Turner was able to pick up, understand, and exemplify the laws of nature through his powers of visual observation. Ruskin's realization of Turner's visual skills grew as he continued to study the artist throughout the seventeen years in which he wrote **Modern Painters**. When comparing Turner's geological drawing with natural law Ruskin wrote:

> I do not mean to assert that this great painter is acquainted with the geological laws and facts he has thus illustrated; I am not aware whether he be or not; I merely wish to demonstrate, in points admitting of demonstration, that intense observation of, and strict adherence to, truth. (III, 465-66)

Seventeen years later Ruskin was sure that Turner had had no scientific training. He wrote that Turner "was entirely ignorant of all the laws we have been developing. He had merely accustomed himself to see impartially, intensely, and fearlessly" (VII, 68).

Ruskin always saw God in nature: he saw the laws of Providence or moral law in the natural world and the depiction of such law in Turner's art. In **The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin's Genius** (1961), John Rosenberg wrote that there are three dominant motifs in **Modern Painters:** "adoration of God, of nature, and of art--especially the art of Turner, in whose landscapes and seascapes Ruskin saw an image of sacred, inexhaustible Nature" (p. 6).

Ruskin's analysis of Turner, then, is based not only on his first-hand examination of Turner's works, and on his own scientific understanding of nature, but also on his belief in the moral implications of man's close study and understanding of natural law. This third basis for his comments on Turner reveals Ruskin's interests beyond the field of art; but, for Ruskin, they represented necessary concerns for the worthy and true artist. Art must be devoted to the representation of nature through a love for nature; it cannot be created for the sake of art alone. Such ideas are far from acceptable to the modern critic. In **The Two Paths** (1858-59), Ruskin stressed this condition of art again and explicated the moral implications of a nation which creates art in view of a love for nature, and of nations which do not:

> Wherever art is practised for its own sake, and the delight of the workman is in what he *does* and *produces*, instead of in what he *interprets* or *exhibits* --there art has an influence of the most fatal kind on brain and heart, and it issues, if long so pursued, in the *destruction both of intellectual power* and *moral principle*; whereas art, devoted humbly and self-forgetfully to the clear statement and record of the facts of the universe, is always helpful and beneficient to mankind, full of comfort, strength, and salvation. (XVI, 268)

This view of moral strength coming from the clear representation of nature is not one to be held by the twentieth-century art critic. Kenneth Clark, in **Ruskin**

Today (1964), bluntly pointed out that Ruskin's belief in nature is "emphatically not for today" (p. 87). Whether or not modern critics are able to identify or accept the spiritual significance Ruskin attached to nature, his claim of Turner's superiority in depiciting the natural world, in all its strength and beauty, is valid and consistent.

Ruskin studied Turner's works closely and seriously for a large part of his life in the same way that he studied science and nature. His belief in the necessity of natural depiction in great art was held sincerely. Ruskin chose Turner as an artist who illustrated his principles of truth to nature and his beliefs in the importance of nature to art and to man. At the end of his seventeen year treatise on art, Ruskin explained that he began **Modern Painters** because he "knew it to be demonstrable, that Turner was right and true, and that his critics were wrong, false, and base." And he explained that in "the main aim and principle of the book [the five volumes of **Modern Painters**], there is no variation, from its first syllable to its last. It declares the perfectness and eternal beauty of the work of God [or nature]" (VII, ix-x). Throughout his art criticism, then, Ruskin was consistent. He always saw nature as the most noble object of art, and as capable of revealing moral lessons. Truth to nature is always the first principle of the artist and Turner is the artist Ruskin upheld as the greatest landscape painter who had ever lived. Finally, Ruskin always saw truth to nature as the most significant feature of Turner's art.

APPENDIX III

Ideas of Invention
and Turner's **Pass of Faido**

Ruskin, in his perception of art, emphasized the importance of the artist's imagination and the emotional aspects of natural depiction. His emphasis on truth to nature never means exact imitation of a natural scene; although he stressed that the artist must never draw anything contrary to natural law or anything he has not seen himself, he did not deny the artist room for expression of feeling, beauty, or imagination in his art and composition. John D. Rosenberg, in **The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin's Genius** (1961), explained quite simply that:

> The whole theory of truth in **Modern Painters** is an attempt to explain why only an artist who had studied nature with photographic fidelity and precision could have rendered so magnificently a scene no camera could catch. (p. 1)

Rosenberg warned that one might feel Ruskin was contradicting himself, but

> the contradiction exists only if we confuse nature with a photograph of nature, a fixed and imitable fact. For Ruskin nature was infinitely various, infinitely potent, but visible only to eyes which in Wordsworth's phrase, half-create what they perceive. (p. 11)

Ruskin asserted as early as **Modern Painters** I that truth to nature means far more than mere imitation, but he was not fully to develop his theory of what more it might mean until thirteen years later in his discussion of Turner's **Pass of Faido** as the product of the artist's "inventive powers."

The beginning of Ruskin's concern for those truths in Turner which go beyond factual representation in nature appears at the close of Volume One. According to Ruskin, there is an emotional truth as significant as truth to natural fact. But only after developing his powers to observe and to draw nature accurately, should the artist begin to use his imaginative powers: he can alter the composition of a scene by combining his own emotional perceptions with the laws of nature. But anything the artist might add or change in his composition must be done according to what he has seen. Ruskin's instructions to young artists, given at the end of the volume, point toward his later discussions on Turner's imagination and inventive powers in art:

> From young artists nothing ought to be tolerated but simple *bona fide imitation* of nature . . . . We do not want their crude ideas of composition, their unformed conceptions of the Beautiful, . . . we scorn their velocity: for it is without direction; we reject their decision: for it is without grounds; we condemn their composition: for it is without materials; we reprobate their choice: for it is without comparison. Their duty is neither to choose, nor compose, nor imagine, nor experimentalize; but to be humble and earnest in following the steps of nature, and tracing the finger of God . . . . They should keep to quiet colours, greys and browns; and, making the early works of Turner their example, as his latest are to be their object of emulation, should go to Nature in all

> singleness of heart . . . rejecting nothing, and scorning nothing; believing all things to be right and good, and rejoicing always in the truth. Then, when their memories are stored, and their imaginations fed, and their hands firm, let them . . . show us what their heads are made of . . . . [We] will listen to their words in all . . . faith and humility; but not unless they themselves have before bowed, in the same submission, to a higher Authority and Master. (III, 623)

This lengthy quotation is necessary for an understanding of what Ruskin meant by imagination, and later by invention. To imagine something is not to make something up but to allow thoughts and visions of those things already seen and understood in nature to arise spontaneously from the artist's memory. Ruskin saw Turner's early works as examples of the "simple *bona fide imitation* of nature." But when he looked at Turner's late works he realized they held a truth beyond the truths of factual reproduction; Ruskin suggested that in his later works Turner painted from his memory, always accurate to what he had seen, always desiring to create the highest truth of feeling combined with the truth of fact to natural law. It should be remembered that Ruskin was still a young writer at this point and had not yet clearly formed his theory of the imaginative powers of the artist (although the basic principles of his nature theory are already visible in the first volume of **Modern Painters**). In Volume Two of **Modern Painters** he looked specifically at beauty and imagination, dealing with Italian artists in the main. By the time of Volume Three he had refocused his attention on Turner and begun to formulate his theory of invention.

By 1856, the year in which he wrote **Modern Painters** Volumes Three and Four, Ruskin's ideas on truth and imagination were fairly stable. As in **Modern Painters** Volume One, he stressed that, though he praised Turner's abilities to draw nature according to natural laws and details, he was not condoning the mechanical imitation of a scene; the emotional responses of the artist must be brought into his work. However, they must be controlled by the imaginative faculty, which Ruskin here began to call poetic truth or invention. He was careful to point out that he did not mean the process of making things up or of trying to improve nature (two things done by artists who use fancy, not imagination),{1} but of composing, rearranging, or changing a scene through memory and imagination according to natural law. Kenneth Clark gave a summary of these various ideas in **Ruskin Today** (1964), in which he wrote:

> even the most superior mind and the most powerful imagination must found itself on facts, which must be recognized for what they are. The imagination will often reshape them in a way which the prosaic mind cannot understand; but this recreation will be based on facts, not on formulas or illusions. (pp. 133-34)

Ruskin argued that Turner's recreation, especially in his late paintings, reflected the workings of just such an imagination.

Early in the third volume of **Modern Painters** Ruskin clearly outlined the four qualities which in his opinion were necessary for great art. The most important of these qualities was "invention." He had at this point clarified the definition of this term: invention, or the poetic power of the artist, involves accuracy of memory and imagination in order truly to produce the feeling or atmosphere of a scene (to modify a scene by incorporating only those things which have actually been seen in nature).

At the beginning of Volume Four Ruskin finally related all of these ideas of the imagination and invention to Turner and to Turner's ability to draw nature truly. Ruskin compared topography, the accurate depiction of natural landscape, to "Turnerian topography." Ruskin had written in Volume Three that all great art must be inventive, but he had also stressed that an artist is wrong to draw what he does not see. However, an artist like Turner, with true inventive power, actually had visions: "he [received] a true impression from the place itself . . . then he [set] himself as far as possible to reproduce that impression" (VI, 33-35). If an artist does not have invention he must not alter nature purposely (as other critics believed Turner was doing in his works). His picture should be topographical: "Not a line is to be altered, not a stick nor stone removed, not a colour deepened, not a form improved; the picture is to be . . .

the reflection of the place in a mirror." But if a painter does have inventive power "he is to treat his subject in a totally different way; giving . . . the impression it made on his mind" (VI, 31 and 32). This is "Turnerian topography".

Ruskin went to great lengths to prove to his readers that Turner's art, especially his later work, was true to nature. And he spent many years investigating the powers of the artist's imagination. In Volume Four he chose one of Turner's works to illustrate pictorially what he meant by true inventive powers. Ruskin provided two etchings of the descent of the St. Gothard, towards Italy, just after one passes through the narrow gorge above Faido. He used one of his own etchings of the **Pass of Faido** which gives the topographical outline of the scene--an exact duplicate (photographic representation) of what was before him. With this topographical representation he included Turner's etching of the **Pass of Faido**, the example of Turnerian topography. The two works differ, though drawn by these two artists from the same spot. Of the actual landscape Ruskin wrote:

> There is nothing in this scene, taken by itself, particularly interesting or impressive. The mountains are not elevated, not particularly fine in form, and the heaps of stones which encumber the Ticino present nothing notable to the ordinary eye. But, in reality, the place is approached through one of the narrowest and most sublime ravines in the Alps, and after the traveller during the early part of the day has been familiarized with the aspect of the highest peaks of the Mont St. Gothard, . . . although no

> very elevated mountains immediately overhang it, the scene is felt to belong to, and arise in its essential characters out of, the strength of those mightier mountains in the unseen north. (VI, 35)

Ruskin concluded that any topographical drawing of the facts cannot arouse those sensations actually experienced by the traveller; that "the aim of the great inventive landscape painter must be to give the far higher and deeper truth of mental vision, rather than that of the physical facts" (VI, 35-36). Ruskin then described the changes made in Turner's representation of the **Pass of Faido**, always showing that Turner's changes were made in compliance with nature's principles. The changes were not made up, but were the result of Turner's *"remembering* something which [would] fit better in that place" (VI, 39-40). Ruskin showed how a piece of road in Turner's etching which differed from the actual scene was in fact a perfect duplicate of a road that had existed in the pass some thirty years earlier. Turner had drawn this in his **Liber Studiorum** thirty years before and recalled it to reproduce the true impression that the artist had received when approaching the pass. Ruskin pointed out this power of Turner's memory in discussions of other of Turner's works throughout the catalogues written later in his life. Ruskin's most important conclusion from this study of the **Pass of Faido** is that Turner's inventive power does not consist in a voluntary production of new images, but an involuntary remembrance, exactly at the right moment, of something he actually saw. In the introduction to **The Harbours of England** Ruskin repeated the central notions of Turner's inventive power: Turner never drew anything that could be seen, without having seen it; and once he had seen something in nature, the image of it could not be effaced from his mind.

Notes

1. Coleridge also used these two terms--fancy and imagination--to distinguish between the inferior and superior qualities of the imagination. Although the terms are not used in precisely the same way, both writers used fancy pejoratively, to indicate the lower faculty of the mind. Coleridge, too, stressed that whatever man creates must be based on some reality; as John Livingston Lowes explained in **The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination**, "Coleridge's art is nowhere more supreme than in his scrupulous adherence to tangible fact in his universe of sheer imagination," (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955), p. 118.

See Coleridge's Chapter XIII, "On the Imagination, or Esemplastic Power," in **Biographia Literaria or, Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions**, ed. J. Shawcross, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), first published in 1817.

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